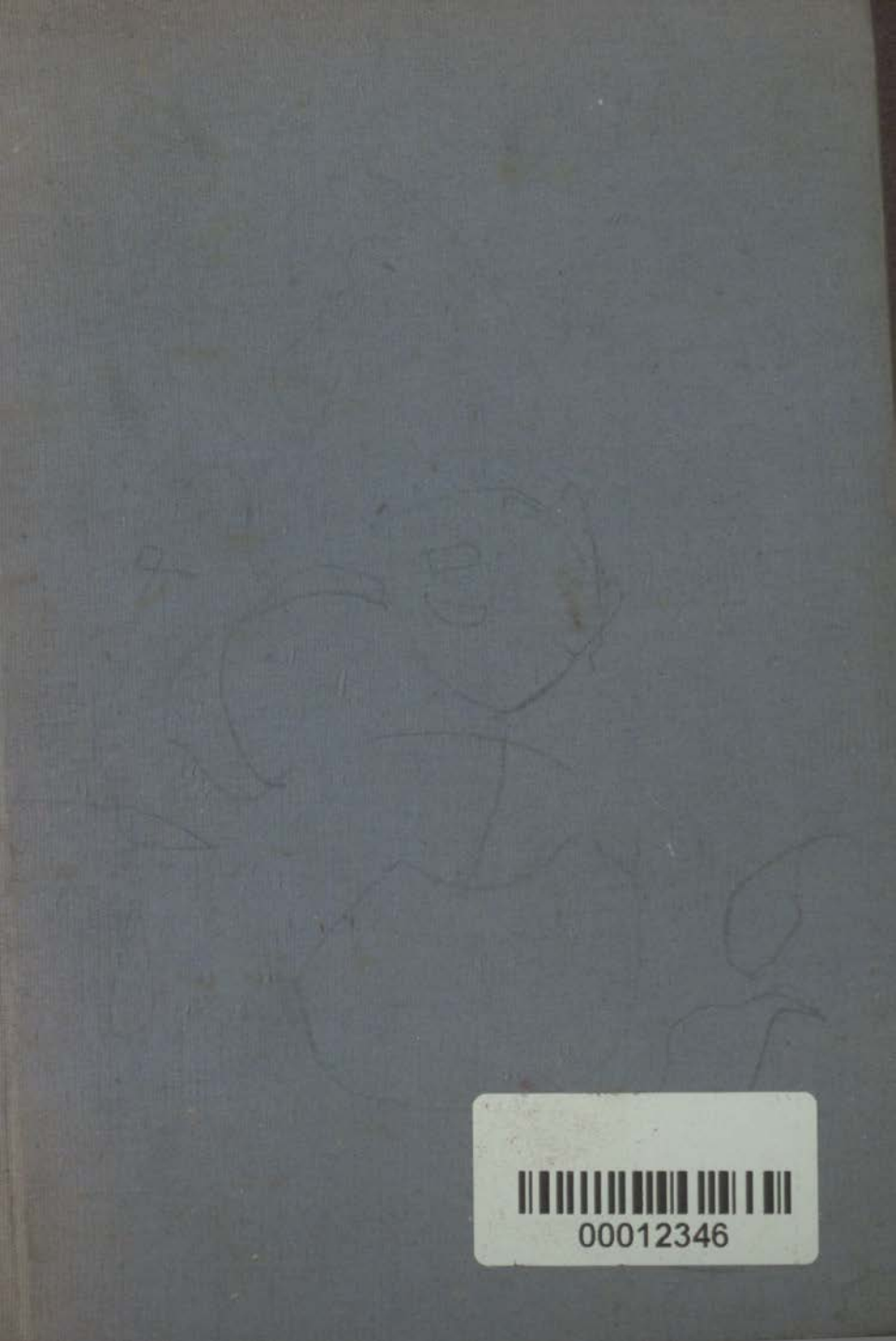
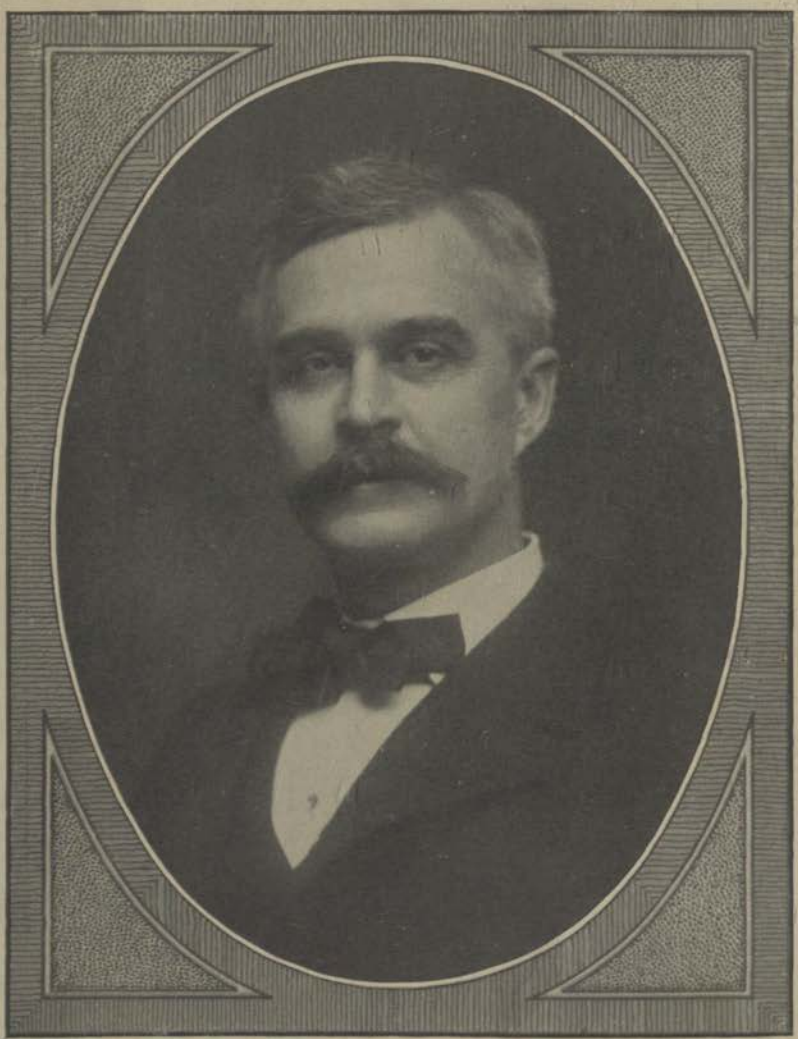

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CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS, D. D.

*EDITION DE LUXE*

# HUSBAND, WIFE AND HOME

*By* CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS, D.D.

Author of "The Redemption of David Corson," "Hits and Misses," "The Optimist," "The Loom of Life," "Little Saint Sunshine," Etc., Etc.

*With Introduction by*
*SYLVANUS STALL, D. D.*



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Dedicated

TO THE

QUEEN OF ALL HOME-MAKERS

BY HER HUSBAND

THE AUTHOR

# INTRODUCTION.

THE Creator has not endowed all men alike. He has crowned some as kings and princes among their fellows. They are kings by divine right. They are king-filled by the King of kings. They are sons of the Infinite; they are attuned with deity and in sympathy with universal humanity. They are conscious not only of fatherhood, but of brotherhood. They love not so much to receive as to give. To them to be is to bless. They are greater than any material splendors by which they could be surrounded. To such an one his palace may be an outward expression of himself, but his real fulness cannot be expressed. It is a rare privilege to stand within his courts; but when the recollection of all the wealth and splendor of the palace, with its architecture and art, its courts and corridors, its coronets and crowns, has faded from the memory, there still remains in undiminished beauty the recollection of him whose seal of divine right was in the great simplicity, broad sympathy and boundless love, that made him king.

It is my rare privilege to walk with you, up the broad avenue, that I may stand for a moment under the palatial portal and present you to the splendid spirit whose outward expression is found in the following chapters.

As no king has a right to reign until he has learned to serve, and as hardship prepares for kingship, so with the author to whom you are to be presented.

Dr. Charles Frederic Goss was born fifty-two years ago. His early life was full of hardship and struggle, but his sympathies were broad, his purposes inspiring, his life courageous. When he had worked his way through college

# Introduction

and completed his preparation for the gospel ministry, he entered upon life's great work in one of the frontier towns in America. To him the privilege of being a blessing to those who so much needed his ministry was greater than the self-denial and privations which the work imposed. He came with a message from the King of kings. He was not a herald, but he came in the spirit of a king's son, and as such was known, respected and loved.

It was after his service of a few years on the western plains that Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist, listening to the humble story of his life, was impressed by the greatness of the man, and invited him to Chicago as his co-worker and as pastor in charge of Mr. Moody's church in that city.

After giving himself in largest measure to this extensive work, Mr. Goss, with broken physical powers, sought rest and recuperation abroad, but his health was not regained until after he had spent two years on the plains in the open air as one of God's husbandmen. From his free life in the West he was called ten years ago to the assistant pastorate of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, and a couple of years later to the Avondale Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, where his ministry has continued to abound in extensive service and great usefulness. It was here that he wrote, among other books, *The Redemption of David Corson*, the book which gave him a national reputation. He is to-day one of the best-known and most widely-read writers on the Sunday-school lessons in America.

But why do I keep you waiting under the portals while the king awaits you within?

SYLVANUS STALL.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, U. S. A.

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# I

## HUSBAND, WIFE AND HOME.

THESE three words—husband, wife and home—might almost be called the alphabet of civilization, for with them humanity must spell out its destiny.

That ineradicable affinity which draws the sexes together is the greatest single mystery of the mortal part of our existence. To discover its divine significance; to give liberty to its action, but to withhold license; to consecrate it to the elevation of the race as well as the happiness of the individual—these are our sacred and sublime duties.

So significant and so fascinating is this attraction of human atoms for each other that its observation and discussion never become stale or needless.

Love is the inspiration of literature and of art; politics and war are games of love, and if you trace even religion back to its early beginnings, you are amazed to discover how deeply it is

rooted in the mystery of sex. This sublime and terrible affinity is to the phenomena of human life what the attraction of gravitation is to those of the material universe. (If you wish to make the individual happy, you have only to provide him (or her) with a congenial mate.) If you wish to lift Society into a state of blessedness, you have only to point out how people can gratify purely the manifold passions of sex.

And yet this greatest of all problems, this fundamental question into which all others seem capable of being resolved, is the one about which few of us are deeply wise, and none of us are permitted freely to discuss. Of all the mysteries of human life, there is not any one more utterly confounding than this—that we cannot talk freely about that one thing which concerns us most. We are denounced if we debate it in books. We are deserted if we broach it upon platforms. We are shunned if we try to elucidate it in private conversation. It is the subject that animates the coarse witticisms of almost all classes and conditions of men; but those who banter it freely in jest will not tolerate its presentation in seriousness. Fathers shrink from explaining it to their sons, and mothers refuse to unfold it to their daughters. Children are left to learn all they know about it

from the most shameful and inadequate sources and to wreck themselves upon rocks which their parents and guardians might have taught them how to avoid.

Is this secrecy necessary? Will more harm than good come from free discussion of the problems of sex? Has Nature made it impossible for us to talk about that which is the most vital concern of every individual member of the race? Can no system of education be devised by which the adolescent mind can be illuminated without its sensuality being excited? We tremblingly await the coming of some new genius like Pestalozzi—"Who compelled the scholastic world to revise the whole of their task, to reflect on the nature and destiny of man and also on the proper way of leading him from his youth toward that destiny."

There are hopeful signs in the sky. Books are issuing from the press in which this whole subject is being broached with a delicacy that gives promise of a better future—a future in which the inculcation of the virtues of the soul shall be as scientific as the cultivation of the faculties of the mind.

In the meantime, while humanity is still in this state of morbid sensitiveness, we can at least with

utter freedom discuss the beauty of that home life which is the highest expression and sphere of sexual love. To the glorification of this noblest of all human institutions—the home, it is the duty of humanity to consecrate its highest genius and its noblest effort. The celebration of its blessedness ought to be the purpose of the poet's loftiest songs. To adorn the walls of those buildings which shield this sacred life of the family, the artists should dedicate their supremest powers. To enact laws which shall give it the greatest freedom and security ought to be the highest ambition of the statesman; and there is no nobler mission for the soldier than to lay his life down in its defence.

Do you imagine that the "home" (in the sense in which we now understand that word) has attained a position of absolute security among the institutions of human life? It is a fond and foolish delusion. No institution is secure that is not defended by eternal vigilance. "Instability" is the one word Nature has written upon all organizations and ideas. The evil passions of humanity are at eternal war with the good. There is not a conclusion at which men have arrived to-day which is not being set upon with the virulence of an invincible madness by the destructive forces

in the brain and heart of man. Millions of our fellows are deliberately and desperately engaged in an attempt to undermine and destroy civil government, private property, common schools, churches, and the home.

In fact, it is against this last and noblest of them all that the fiercest attacks are being made. It may seem like the ravings of a madman when I say that only as heroic and indomitable effort as was made to save Holland from Spain can preserve human society from polygamy, polyandry, free love, or some other age-old and rotten form of relationship between the sexes. But the single phenomenon of the increasing number of divorces (to say nothing of Mormonism and Communism) ought to startle all patriots from that easy security which is forever inviting the impudence and the onslaught of lust. We must of necessity fight as hard to-day to preserve the home as our ancestors did to achieve it. And our posterity will have to battle as hard as we, for no man sees the signs of a diminution of that anarchic disposition in the soul of humanity to gratify its lusts without restraint.

It is not pleasant to impugn the motives of our fellow-men. But it would be the very imbecility of charity to admit that the people who denounce

# Husband, Wife and Home

Christian marriage and the home made up of one man and one woman bound in perpetual ties (with their children) can be sincere and good. They know, unless they are unpardonably ignorant, that "marriage," as Goethe said, "is the beginning and summit of all civilization." They know that it is the final act of Nature's selection among all other possible relationships. One after another she has experimented with the others and cast them all aside. She does not attempt to deny that in the present state of human development this final and divine relationship will work hardship in many cases. But she proclaims upon the housetop and with a note of unwavering assurance: "This is the true relationship between the male and female members of the race. I have tried them all. The rest are false!"

"God has set the type of marriage everywhere throughout creation," Luther nobly said.

It is to the defence and honor of this conception of the home (as composed of the man and woman bound together in the indissoluble ties of wedlock, with their children) that this volume is dedicated.

## II

## ACCEPTING FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES.

EVERY imbuement with power or endowment with grace involves some sort of responsibility. That is to say, having been given the gift, we must be answerable for its use.

(But the most distinctive gift of life is sex.) And yet everywhere in human society we see people trying to enjoy its prerogatives without performing its duties.

Let us bring the people of the average American community into court to answer this charge.

Young men, how many of you are trying to filch the pleasures of manhood while you shirk the duties of the married state? Husbands and wives, how many of you are quaffing the pleasures of matrimony while refusing to bear the burdens of parenthood?

Parents, how many of you are immersing yourselves in business and pleasure while repudiating

responsibility for the moral and spiritual education of your offspring, or at best putting it off on the shoulders of employés? How many of you are trying to crawl out from under the responsibility of caring for poor or helpless relatives, of sharing your homes with fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law and bachelor uncles and spinster aunts?

I wonder if I can feather a few shafts, draw my bow at a venture, and hit one of these skulkers on the great battlefield of life.

In the first place, a responsibility avoided is not a responsibility evaded; for our neglected duties "keep." Nature puts them in cold storage. We slink away from them, as Jonah did when he fled to Joppa to take ship for Tarshish. But that undone duty came "cross lots" to the very spot where the great fish cast him on the shore and once more insisted on its performance. Who has not thus met avoided duties, even after many years? Who does not know that they have a way of turning up again in unexpected times and places?

But more than this. Our duties present themselves in a twofold aspect: at first as opportunities for usefulness, and second as avengers of their neglect. Now it is comparatively easy to avoid the task presented in the opportunity, but the



THE LOVERS. (See page 9.)

trouble is to evade the opportunity when it has been transformed into the avenger. The sea which engulfed the recreant Jonah was his "duty" become his "punishment."

No! You have not done with marriage when you have refused to enter into it. Neither have you done with the children to whom you refused to give birth, nor with the dependent and helpless relatives whom you refused to support. Hidden behind some mask in which you may never recognize them, these metamorphosed duties lie in wait along the pathway of your life, all ready to mete out the punishment of your sin. Nature is organized upon the principle of retributive justice. Her laws are automatic. To every transgression its own punishment is attached. To multitudes of people now feeling the coils of destiny folding around them like a great anaconda it has to be said: "These coils are the duties that you avoided, but could not evade. They vanished as opportunities, but have returned to you as judges and executioners."

In the second place, responsibilities accepted are weights which turn into wings. Undoubtedly the obligations and duties of the married life are burdens which are often grievous to be borne. It is hard to give up our bachelor or our spinster

ways and divide our income and our luxuries with another. It is hard to bear children and to rear them, to discipline them and chasten them and agonize over them. It is hard to give up our spare bedroom to some dependent old uncle, or to have the peace of our household disturbed by some querulous old grandfather. It is hard to have to go without books and pictures and automobiles in order to shield some miserable, extravagant and ungrateful relative from the consequences of his own wrongdoing.

But the beauty of it is that responsibilities accepted change their forms, just as responsibilities avoided do. They appear at first as weights and afterward as wings. The disagreeable burden that presses us down beneath its load at last begins to grow buoyant and lift us up. It carries us instead of our carrying it.

Years pass sometimes before this beatific transformation takes place. We seem likely to be crushed by the weary load. But we have only to be patient and to wait; for the time will surely come when the strength and grace developed by the faithful performance of these tasks will become so great as to make the task itself seem light.

Have you ever observed a mother carrying a sick baby? Is there not a true sense in which the

baby is really carrying her? It is the burden, the care, the task, the responsibility of life that alone can furnish inspiration for living. Nothing crushes us so quickly as care-freeness. We can support the whole weight of the atmosphere, but not the emptiness of a vacuum.

The solemn experience of the ages has taught us many truths about duty which we ought to burn into our memories as with a branding-iron.

"Every duty we omit obscures some truth we should have known."

"To run out of the path of duty is to run into the way of danger."

"The slightest deviation from a known duty will sometimes lead us to the abyss."

"He who is false to the present duty breaks a thread in the loom and will find the flaw in the pattern, when, perhaps, it will be too late to repair it."

"Duty frowns on you when you flee from her, but when you follow her she smiles."

"As birds were made to fly and rivers to run, so the soul was made to follow duty."

"The every-day cares and duties which men call drudgery are the weights and counterpoises of the clock of time, giving its pendulum a true vibration and its hands a regular motion. And,

when they cease to hang upon its wheels, the pendulum no longer swings, the hands no longer work, the clock stands still."

Nothing, then, can be so pitiful, futile, and tragic as to try to avoid the responsibilities of sex. They are inevitable; they are imposed by heaven and they are divinely arranged for our highest good. It is necessary for us to accept them and to discharge them nobly. It is the solemn obligation of men and women to marry, to rear children, to make their home an asylum for the helpless members of their family circle; to toil, to economize, to sacrifice and, if necessary, to die for others.

Have you been dodging and skulking along the pathway of life to avoid some one of these great and gracious obligations? For shame! Come out in the open. Meet that obligation face to face. Embrace it in your arms and press it to your heart.

Can anything be more irrational than to be afraid to perform the functions of nature—to be afraid to live, to labor, to marry, to bear children, to found a home, to suffer, to die?

## III

## PROFIT AND LOSS OF MATRIMONY.



N a perfectly normal human experience the profit and loss of marriage is no more a matter of calculation than is the mating of birds or the blossoming of flowers. Imagine a rosebud sitting down to figure out whether it had better bloom or not.

When everything goes as it ought to the affections of young hearts burst into blossom like lilies, and, hand-in-hand, under the impulse of a divine emotion, they make their way to the marriage altar without a doubt or question as to what is sacrificed or gained.

But in the strain of life there are so many abnormal experiences. Through poverty, or the pressure of unusual responsibilities, or the accidents of solitude, or preoccupation, multitudes grow out of that divine period of impulse and instinct into another of reflection and calculation before they fall in love. To them marriage

becomes a "question." They have reached that unhappy stage where this heaven-appointed relationship appears a matter not of necessity, but of choice. Nothing is more pitiful than its cold and impartial discussion. The dilemma "to marry or not to marry" is a tragedy like that other one, "to be or not to be," for marriage is as much a duty and a privilege as life itself.

But because multitudes of human beings are this day and every day debating it as coldly as an investment in stocks or the purchase of an automobile, let us erect a balance and throw the reasons for and against the marriage relationship slowly and calmly into the scales.

What do we avoid by staying single?

1. The risk of drawing a blank or catching a Tartar! Certainly, if marriage is not a complete lottery it is in many senses a game of chance. Nothing is more certain than that the real, vital, essential principles of character are a post-marital discovery. Enormous risks are taken. But this is true of the acquirement of any great good in life. People who do not take the hazard of a noble chance may gain trifles, but not immensities.

2. The loss of personal liberty. The older we grow the more we prize the alluring sweetness of

entire freedom from entangling alliances. Anything that hampers the play of our own free will becomes intolerable or irksome. By staying single we preserve our liberty to use all our money in the gratification of our personal tastes. The world is fuller and fuller of luxuries which it is bliss to enjoy. If you stay single you can spend your money in their acquisition without a qualm as to whether you ought not to divide with a woman who also has tastes of her own.

A man would be dishonest who denied the gain of "liberty" or the value of it in "single-blessedness." There is a deep and real pleasure in being free as a bird of the air, with no clamorous wills to cross your own and no uncomplaining but appealing souls to convict us of selfishness. But the great trouble with such gains is that they are also fatal losses. What people gain in liberty they lose in love and goodness. And the testimony of history is that unless this liberty is consecrated to some mission (that of a priest, a soldier, an inventor, an artist, a nurse, a philanthropist) liberty becomes license, and license becomes lust or laxness.

What do we gain by getting married?

1. The satisfaction that we are obeying a fundamental law and elemental instinct. Is it not a

solid comfort to be in line with Nature, to perform heaven-appointed obligations, to march with the procession? If there is an indescribable joy in saying "I am a man," "I am a woman," there is a similar joy in saying "I am a married man," "I am a married woman." "I have obeyed a primordial law—to help perpetuate the race and people the earth."

2. The enjoyment of love. No soul has tried the deepest experience of life that has not given and received love. To be a human being and have never loved is like being a bird and never have flown. Who has not loved has not lived. The most wonderful and meaningful of all the phases of life has been untried and unknown by those who have not loved.

3. The comfort of friendship. Even in marriage where the deepest love has never been developed, where there has been much living at cross-purposes and even unhappiness and bitterness, there is liable to be an incalculable amount of sympathetic companionship.

4. The benefit of ballast. It is of enormous importance to everyone to have weights and burdens imposed upon him in life. We get "flighty" without them, like balloons; we reel and pitch like ships; we throw our feet like trot-

ting horses. What we need is gravity. Something must hold us down. Ask any serious-minded man or woman what has done the most to form his or her character, and the answer will be, "The burden of the family." It is this that keeps them steady on their keels.

5. Incentive—which is the deepest need of life. As the years multiply the danger of every living soul lies in the discovery of the vanity of existence. When we see how little the struggle amounts to, that fatal cry arises from broken hearts to trembling lips, "What's the use?" Weariness, lassitude, ennui, pessimism—these are the foes of all men and women who are not driven to their tasks by stern necessity or impelled by some divine incentive. But is there any other such incentive as a wife and a brood of little children? How they keep men up to their work. With the thought of these dear objects in their minds, how fathers march up to cannon mouths; how mothers dare the deadly foes and do the impossible deeds of life.

Which scale-pan rises?

I say once more, as I have said so often in the wedding service, "Marriage is the ever-blessed ordinance of God."

## IV

## "HOMEMAKERS" VERSUS "HOUSEKEEPERS."

THE two words "housekeepers" and "homemakers" look alike; but nothing is more deceptive than resemblance. "Housekeeping" is a sort of counterfeit of "homemaking."

Undoubtedly "housekeeping" is an art, and a very fine art, too. In every community you may see it brought to its highest perfection. There are certain famous residences (I cannot call them homes) where a spider would die of fright and a fly would commit suicide from the very weight of solitude.

You can see your face in the panels of the doors and eat your meals on the hard-wood staircase. A lace curtain that should hang awry would blush Turkey red, and a chair left out of place would walk solemnly back to where it belonged on its own four shining legs. Everywhere there is a beautiful harmony of color and arrangement. To

look at it, this interior is perfect. It affords the eye supreme delight.

No wonder the woman who plans and executes this dream of beauty comes under the spell of her own creation. It is the characteristic of art to fascinate her votaries. "Art for art's sake" is the final maxim of her devotees. In this case it is housekeeping for housekeeping's sake. No matter for the man and children; no matter for the guests; no matter for the domestic life. Let them all be sacrificed on the altar of this Moloch, if need be, for the fires of that grinning god must be kept burning. The women who become the victims of the housekeeping mania do not realize it. Maniacs never do.

Now there can be no doubt that a well-kept house in and of itself is a thing of beauty; but the trouble is that it is not only not a joy forever, but never. For a beautiful house is not by inner necessity a beautiful home, any more than a beautiful shell is necessarily the abode of a sea-fish. Poor fellow—he may have been dead a century.

The art of perfect housekeeping may possibly be coincident with that of perfect homemaking. There is no essential contradiction between the two, but there does seem to be a sort of moral

antagonism. It is, at any rate, hard to bring both to their highest perfection under the same roof. To do either alone requires only an average woman consecrated to her task. To accomplish both together requires an extraordinary genius. And so we say give us the homemaker. Give us the woman who knows how to render a home the abode of comfort, to fill it with that divine atmosphere that invites repose; to imbue it with a presence that awakens dreams of peace and love. We may not be able to describe an ideal home, but we know one the moment we cross its threshold. No icy blast of perfection blows through the door. No shrill voice inquires whether we have wiped our shoes, or brushed the dust from our coat, or bids us not to step on the polished floor with the heels of our boots. We hear the sweet voices of children singing in the nursery, or the patter of their scurrying feet as they come romping down the stairs to meet their father returning home from work. A low-spoken woman, with smiling face and cordial manner, meets us in the hall and bids us welcome. We catch sight of a broken toy on the landing of the staircase, and perhaps of a boy's hat flung into a corner—the little rascal. He gets a playful pinch of the ear to pay for it, and a quiet command to

go and pick it up and hang it on the hook; and when he comes back from his accomplished errand he is so far from any consciousness of having committed a crime, that he actually puts his arm around his mother's waist and gets a kiss.

We enter the living-room. Pictures of brave men, beautiful women and smiling landscapes adorn the walls. The furniture is old-fashioned, and, if the truth must be told, is not without a few suggestive nicks. But the chairs are so comfortable. And that "Davenport!" It looks as if the children had actually rolled and tumbled on that expensive upholstery. And the springs are sunken at one end as if John and Mary had sat there very close together, and very often, after the children had gone to bed.

Dinner is announced. We pass into the dining-room informally. The food is simple and wholesome; the maid moves quietly about the table. The conversation is all cheerful (the children having a modest little part), and John tells his best story in his big, bass voice, while Mary draws him out with her bright eyes and shows by her laughter that she admires him profoundly, and by every expression of her countenance that her life is enshrined in his heart.

At 11 o'clock we part for the night, reluctant to

lose a moment of their sweet home life. On the table of the guest-room are little books to give us a word of wisdom and good cheer before we go to sleep. Repose and peace are everywhere. We sit long by the open fire, reflecting on the beauty of it all and wondering at the divine art of the woman. Certainly, the materials with which she has wrought this miracle are not lavish. There is not a sign of wealth. There are even evidences to be seen by sharp glances of very strenuous economies. But if she had possessed only half these materials, or even one-tenth, she would have made a home that would have still tasted of heaven. What she has put into this work of art was *herself*. Other artists have had as fine canvas and as fine paint as the great masters. A masterpiece is not a question of material, but soul. Mary has made this paradise as they made those pictures —by consecration, devotion, genius—the sublimest genius of the world, the genius of the homemaker.

I maintain against all-comers that it requires a greater endowment of soul to make an ideal home than to carve the Venus de Milo, to paint the Last Supper or to build St. Peter's.

## V

## TRUE WIFE OR MARRIED MISTRESS?



HERE are disagreeable facts in our modern life which none of us like to face, and one of them is that married women of the well-to-do classes so often become the legalized mistresses rather than the efficient helpmeets of their husbands.

It is a pathetic aspect of this peril that it often has its origin in the inherent chivalry of American manhood. There is in the souls of these men an instinct deep as their being to make the lives of their mothers, wives and daughters happy as the day is long. They do not begrudge the toil it costs. They rather glory in it, casting themselves into the tasks of life with all the enthusiasm of devotees and martyrs. To see his wife relieved from labor and from care, to provide a beautiful home in which she can live and furnish her with servants who shall obey her lightest wish—this is the cherished dream of the typical American husband.

Now is it not a tragedy that such worthy and unselfish dreams should become the means of a woman's degradation instead of her elevation? But how often it happens in this very mysterious life of ours that we ourselves and those whom we love best become the victims rather than the beneficiaries of virtues carried to excess.

See how this chivalrous devotion operates. A woman who would have stood the hardest discipline of life without a murmur is made a darling and a plaything. Every want and even every whim is gratified, until luxury becomes a necessity, and then a scourge.

It was not the perils of the mountain passes and the dangers of fields of battle, but the luxury of Capua that corrupted the soldiers of Hannibal. To women luxury is as fatal as to soldiers. The idol of a too generous man's home becomes an idler. Exertion grows irksome and finally intolerable. She shrinks from hardship and at last from effort. The dread of the care of little children and the limitation which they put on selfish enjoyment prevent her from becoming a mother. Time hangs heavily on her hands and she begins to seek diversion in society and clubs. Contact with larger circles of life develops a superficial culture. She grows more beautiful with the pass-

ing years. Her husband takes a deeper delight in her personal attraction and her physical charms. To see her sit in that posture of grace beneath the electric light; to behold her move across the room like a crimson cloud athwart the evening sky; to hold a hand as soft as velvet and to kiss a cheek as round and luscious as a peach—for a limited period of his life this seems like the greatest glory of existence to her husband. It is his supreme pride that he is able to keep this beautiful creature in this blissful idleness. He exults in the fact that she is his, to exhibit to his friends and to display at public functions. It is true that there is no deep bond of sympathy between them such as comes from bearing burdens and sharing sorrows together, but her beauty is his compensation.

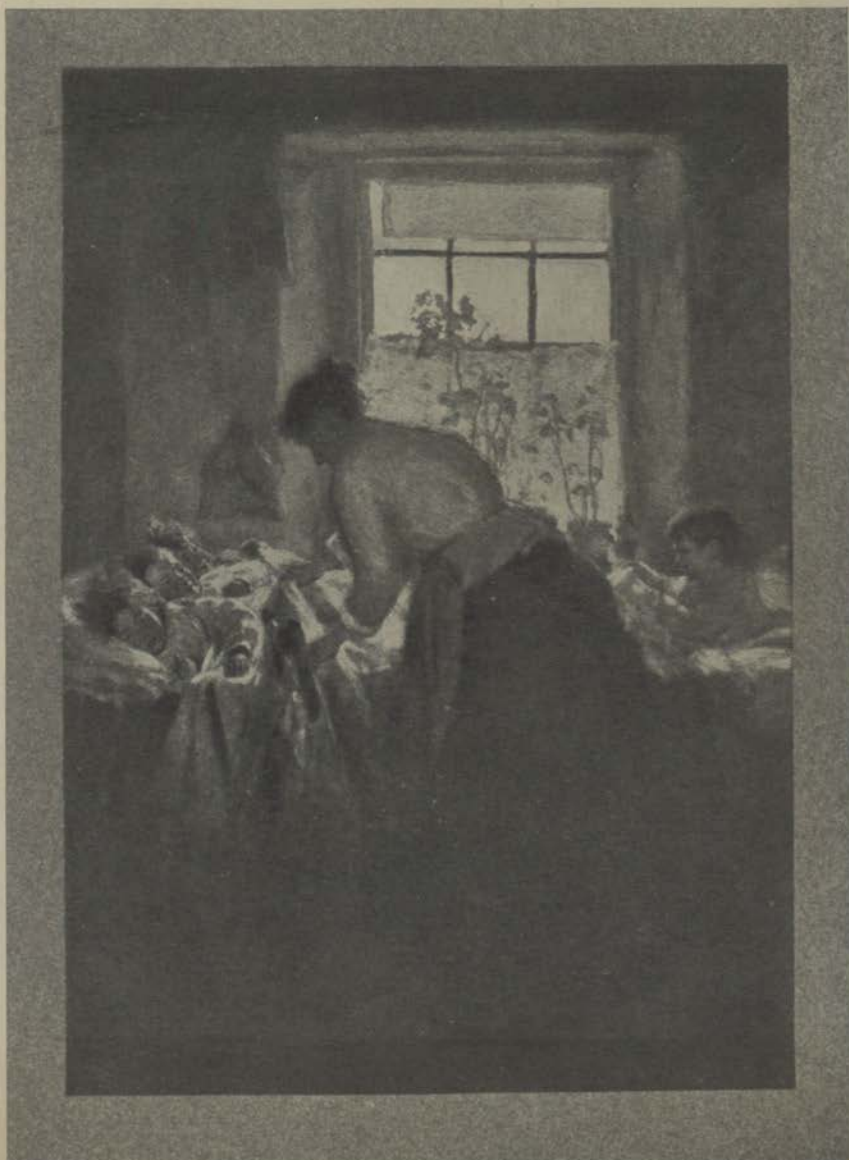
Such women are the most dazzling attactions of the world. They lend a splendor to the passing show and cast a glamour over the misery of existence. And yet the more closely one looks at the characters, conditions and influence of women who lead such lives the more one trembles. In what respect do they differ (in essence) from mere mistresses? When you find the very central qualification of wifehood is it not "helpmeetness?" How can a woman be a true wife to a man who does not in some way share with him the burden,

the care and sorrow of human life! How can she be a good and noble woman if she is not useful, in the true sense of the word?

That person must be a superficial observer of human life who does not know many wives of whom little more can be said than this, "They minister to the sensual needs of their husbands." And the terrible thing about them is that they exist in ever-increasing numbers. They are to be found in hotels and apartment houses idling their time away, as afraid of labor as of a pestilence. By and by the passion for travel seizes them and they go abroad in shoals. Europe is overrun with them. They drift from London to Paris, from Paris to Rome, from Rome to Brussels, spending anywhere from one thousand to one hundred thousand dollars on their journey—glad at last to escape from the performance of even the single service they have rendered to these too generous husbands.

I have no panacea for this evil. I only wish to point it out. It is necessary to know the truth. Such conditions have to be depicted. Beyond the possibility of a doubt, the chivalry of American manhood has helped corrupt its womanhood.

Shall men become less chivalrous, then? No, but more wisely chivalrous. It is not true chivalry



FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES. (See page 15.)

to treat a woman in such a way as to superinduce these vices. It is as base to corrupt a wife as a child with excessive gratifications. It was not women who asked for these superfluous luxuries in the first place. It was the extravagant devotion which men offered them.

And what shall our women do? They must open their eyes to this great peril. There are multitudes who are not yet in danger. The great masses of them are still pulling loyally in the harnesses with their husbands. Their hands are marked with toil. They have not been emancipated from labor (thank God), and they are wives in the truest sense of the word—helpmeets in the struggles of life.

But among the readers of this essay there will be not a few women who are wives in name alone. To loll in bed all the morning, to play cards all the afternoon, to go to the theatre at night—is this to live? Is it to be a woman and a wife? It is only to do exactly what some women do who are not wives at all.

It is not the "marriage vow" that makes a wife, but fellowship in the burden-bearing of human life.

No man can permanently respect a woman who is not useful. The time will come when his heart

will revolt. Self-love is hateful, even in a young and pretty woman. What will it be when she is old and ugly?

The reign of the mistress has ever lasted but a summer day, out of wedlock or in it. If you wish to wield the sceptre over a man's heart when you are no longer beautiful in person, you must be beautiful in soul.

The love of old age is the memory of joys and sorrows borne together in the days of auld lang syne.

## VI

## THE WELCOME OF THE BABY.

WHAT a profound tragedy it is that the advent of a little child (the most touching and the most sublime phenomenon in the world) may excite regret and even anger in a home! Did you ever stop to think that the ecstasy with which a baby is welcomed is an acquired and not a natural joy, and so is the high-water mark of human evolution?

One summer while lying in a hospital bed, I heard from the lips of a young nurse a powerful description of her horror at the discovery that babies were not always welcome. She learned this hideous lesson in a New York institution, where the homeless women of the great metropolis came to give birth to their offspring. When she saw with her own eyes that these perverted wretches had to be watched for fear they would desert the seed of their own bodies (or even kill them), she said that the very world seemed to rock

beneath her feet, and she discovered with amazement that the love of children (I say "love" in the Christian sense) is the finest fruit of countless centuries of the education of the moral and spiritual nature of human beings.

The race will never go back to barbarism and paganism, but individuals are constantly doing so. It is not only the miserable outcasts of the slums and the tenderloins who hate their offspring, but the occupants of hotels, flats and "houses that are not homes" are manifesting the same repugnance to childbearing.

I know a group of ten young couples who were married, some eight or nine years ago, and there are only three children among them, and these are all in the same home.

This is not the place to discuss the details of this revival of paganism. The whole subject of antagonism to the bearing of children is replete with warning; for married people in great numbers to be hostile to their advent is to threaten the stability of human society and to precipitate themselves individually into the abyss.

But it is the place to set forth in the glowing colors of truth, the blessing of the child in the home and to bid husbands and wives hail its advent with such joy as that with which wanderers

in a wilderness greet the rising sun, or shipwrecked mariners the vessel hastening to their aid.

The traditional difficulties and embarrassments of childbearing and rearing are more imaginary than real. There is not a better authenticated, nor more wonderful and more beautiful fact in life than this—that men and women with large families of children do not have to work perceptibly harder, nor to deny themselves many more of the real comforts of life than those who have none. "It is as easy for a hen to scratch for a dozen chickens as one." It is not actual troubles that people avoid by refusing to have children, nor actual benefits that they gain. Their sole and single motive is a selfish and irrational love of ease and luxury, and Nature is never more grimly ironical than when she multiples the sorrows of childless people without giving them new resources to bear them. It is as absurd to try to avoid troubles by refusing to have children as to avoid labor by refusing to have arms.

It may be an open question how *many* children families ought to have, but there is no question that they ought to have *some*. When people deliberately refuse to bid these little bearers of all the best joys of life a hearty welcome, you may set it down that they are not only knaves, but fools.

# The Welcome of the Baby

The baby introduces us to joys that are not only unknowable, but unimaginable, without its presence in our lives. There is a feeling of wonder at its advent which is deeper and more joyous than our wonder at stars and flowers. There is a kind of tenderness in our souls that no other object can awaken but a child. There is an ineffable happiness in seeing ourselves reproduced in a little boy or girl. It is a happiness than can be caricatured and made to appear absurd, but it cannot be overlooked in taking stock of life's values.

One time a little "upstart" introduced his family of eight children to Susan B. Anthony in these words: "My wife has presented me with eight sons. Do you not see that her mission is grander than yours?"

"Sir," she replied, surveying him contemptuously, "I have seen very few men worthy of being reproduced eight times."

Nevertheless, to see ourselves reappearing in a child must be ranked among the first joys of life. If we have a right to live at all, we have a right to live again.

There are resources of power and wisdom in our souls that nothing has ever called out but a child. And the exercise of these new powers and this

higher wisdom produces a divine satisfaction. It is the bee that makes possible the blooms of flowers, and it is this little human bee who so fertilizes our human souls as to bring them to their noblest perfection.

But above all, there is a certain kind of *love* that wakens only at the voice of the child. Love is of various denominations and magnitudes. There are the loves of friends, of parents, of sweethearts, of flowers, of birds, of music, of country and of God. But no one who has ever felt the love of a little child can put it second to any other emotion in the soul. "The clew of our destiny, wander where we will, lies at the cradle foot." "Children are God's apostles sent forth day by day to preach of love and hope and peace."

And what of the future? Can you not see that those tiny hands which clutch at your fingers are some time to minister to your old age; to close your eyes when you die and to tenderly lay your body in the grave? If you had ever died alone and unattended and could begin life over again, you would sacrifice almost everything for a son or daughter to hold your hand in the supreme moment when your feet touch the waters of the dark river.

But (besides all this) have you no conviction, no purpose, no hope, no philosophy of life, that

you do not wish to have buried with you? Have you no longing to impart a sacred thought to a child and say, "I give you this torch and bid you keep it burning, as the vestal virgins did their lamps, when I am gone."

Oh! bid the baby welcome. Let the day of its advent be a day of joy. Let it come amidst the songs of the angels, as the Christ-child did. Devote yourselves to it. Gaze into its eyes. Press it to your heart. Listen to its inarticulate disclosures of the mystery and meaning of life. It is a seer, an oracle. It has come from God, bringing its "trailing clouds of glory."

"O child! O new-born denizen
Of life's great city! On thy head
The glory of the moon is shed
Like a celestial benison!
Here at the portal dost thou stand
And with thy little hand
Thou openest the mysterious gate
Into the future's undiscovered land."

## VII

## JOY OF PARENTHOOD.

THE more ardently a man loves his fellow-men and the more eagerly he desires their happiness the more earnestly he must plead with them to surround themselves with children. If you haven't any of your own, beg, borrow—I had almost said steal—some.

There is an old couple in Ohio who have adopted and reared twenty-two, the paper says, and adds that "every one of them has become an honorable and useful citizen."

The heads of those old people were "screwed on right," and their hearts were in the proper places. Do you imagine they were ever lonely, or ever suffered from ennui, or ever questioned that they had a mission, or ever wished that they were dead? How the rafters of that old farmhouse must have rung with merry peals of laughter! What joy must those old hearts have had when the letters began coming home from the

twenty-two boys and girls who had gone out into the world to hustle for themselves. And think of the visits from them when they came back to the old homestead bringing their arms full of babies and their hearts full of grateful love.

Ask the gray-headed old people who have brought up big families of children whether they regret it. Inquire of fathers and mothers whether any other joy is so sweet as that of parenthood. Watch these elderly people at those moments when they are off their guard and the joy of their hearts over the children whom God has given them breaks forth into sudden manifestation.

You would never think from old Hardtack's countenance that he had any sentiment in *him.*

He looked as if he could bite a tenpenny nail in two with his teeth, or could foreclose a mortgage on a poor farmer as remorselessly as a steel trap forecloses on a woodchuck's front foot.

But you cannot tell how far a toad can jump from the look of him, nor how young an old fellow's heart is from the gray hairs in his mustache.

Hardtack's only daughter, who had been away to school, was coming home for Christmas, and for a week he has been sort of "off his trolley."

The last night before her arrival he could not sleep, because the drive-wheels of the big locomotive that was bringing her Westward seemed to be going round and round in his head, and his "Maria" heard him murmuring in an early morning doze, "She's coming home—she's coming home."

Nevertheless, in the morning he went down to business, but could not keep his mind upon it, and the long columns of figures on his ledger seemed to get themselves into inextricable tangles. Sometimes, instead of writing his figures with a dollar sign, he would insert the hours at which the train would arrive at Albany, Buffalo and Cleveland, and the columns read like this:

$225.00
10.45 A.M.
$560.00
7.20 P.M.
$480.00
12.15 A.M.

Once, when he was dictating a letter, he astonished the typewriter by saying, "I send you by the next freight 125 pounds of as fine a girl as ever walked in shoe-leather."

When Maria came down to take him to the

train, he was as nervous as he was upon his wedding day, a quarter of a century before. He asked the conductor for a transfer to Vassar College instead of to the Union Depot, and when he bought an evening paper gave the newsboy a dollar bill and told him to keep the change.

The train was an hour and fifteen minutes late, and he paced the depot like a caged lion. "She'll be half-starved," he said to the gatekeeper, who saw through the old fellow, and answered soberly: "Guess not; they have probably fed her a ton and a half of coal since leaving Cleveland."

At last the great locomotive came booming into the station, and Hardtack, forgetting Maria entirely, tore down the platform like a madman.

His heart was pounding so hard, and there was such a queer sort of mist on his spectacles, that he did not recognize his "darling" when he saw her on the platform, and went to the end of the train with a scared notion that she had not come.

In the meantime the young girl had flung herself upon her mother like a little cyclone, and then started off for old Hardtack. She came up behind him, threw both arms around his neck, and gave him such a volley of kisses about his neck and ears that a young soldier said they sounded like a rapid-firing gun.

Poor old Hardtack. He knew in a minute what had happened; and those soft young arms and those warm young kisses and the lump in his throat and the mist on his glasses made him think that he had been seized by a whirlwind and blown over the walls into Paradise.

When he disentangled himself at last he just turned and picked that 125 pounds of girl in his strong arms and laid her on his heart as if she had been a little baby.

"Dear old dad!" said she, as unconscious of the young soldier and the college boys and the rest of the passengers as if they were on the other side of the earth.

That night Hardtack wiped his glasses, over which the mist had been hanging all the evening, and said: "No one need give me any more Christmas presents. I've got all I want."

## VIII

## GIVE YOUR "BEST" TO YOUR HOME.

IN every one of us there is a "best" and a "worst." We have cream and skim milk, silk and fustian in our make-up. It is a test question, "What do you do with the 'best' that is in you?" Some men give the best that is in them to their business. If there is justification for any error, it is for this one. Business is terribly exacting. Competition was never so fierce. Men were never so consecrated to money getting. Other people are putting their noble powers into rival enterprises, and if we do not follow their example we shall get lost in the shuffle.

Some men give their best to their boon companions. It is at the mid-day lunch, or at the evening banquet, or at the "union," or the "league" that you see the full display of their mental resources. All their powers are saved up to be consecrated upon these altars. It is there

that their wit, their grace, their energy are all consumed.

As for the women, many devote their supreme talents to society. It is for the afternoon tea, the evening reception, the card party that they nurse their strength. Thither they bring their sweetest smiles and their most captivating manners. There they wear their brightest jewels and their daintiest gowns.

Many lavish their greatest gifts upon the "club." To that insatiable shrine they carry offerings of intellectual, moral and spiritual graces of which their husbands and their children never dreamed. Nothing is too good for the club: time, money, strength, cheerfulness, courage, purpose, life itself are thrown into that bottomless pit with all the abandon of devoteeism. "And how is your mother getting along?" asked her teacher of a little girl who had just told of the arrival of a baby sister. "Oh! mother wasn't there—she was at the club," the child replied.

It is to none of these objects, however good (and not even to the church, nor to the community, nor to philanthropy) that we ought to give our "best," but to our homes. It is in our homes that we ought to wear our best clothes

and our richest jewels. Put them on, now and then, just for your husband and your children. Don't you think it would do them good to see you in all your loveliness? It is in our homes that we ought also to put on our best manners; there we ought to wear our most smiling faces; there we ought to display our richest mental resources.

But what are the facts? People give to their homes the frazzled ends of their time, their strength and their talents. There is something both piteous and monstrous about the niggardliness of our life at home. Men come back to it wrung out like sponges and squeezed out like oranges. They say they cannot help it. Well, give them the benefit of all the doubt there is. The exactions of the outside world are terrible. But, after all, it is not so much "necessity" as lack of correct ideas that accounts for most men bringing home nothing but the dregs of their best selves.

Women pour their strength into the toil of mere housekeeping with the reckless waste of prodigals and have nothing left but quivering nerves and exasperated tempers for the evening hour at the fireside. They exonerate themselves by describing the tyranny of cooking and cleaning and mending. But who does not know that



BABYHOOD. (See page 40.)

a higher conception of domestic life and nobler ideals of motherhood and wifehood would make them save up the best of all their fund of energy for the contact with children and husband.

A fundamental and unpardonable error always and everywhere is the failure to perceive the relative values of things. It is the creation of a true home atmosphere that is the first business of all married people. Every power of body, mind and spirit is primarily indebted to this great end, and its achievement is worthy of the exercise of your highest talents.

It is because most people do not like to play their "best parts" to such "small audiences," that you see so little high art on the diminutive domestic stage. "What!" we say (away down out of hearing in our souls), "you don't think I can put forth my best efforts to be brave and cheerful and witty and charming in this little, pitiful, domestic circle, do you? I need a greater arena for my talents. How can I work myself up to my highest pitch before this petty, unappreciative audience? There's my old father or mother—half-senile and wholly self-centred. There's my wife (or my husband) tired and stupid to a degree. Besides these, there is no one but the children, and they aren't old enough to

appreciate my powers. No, indeed! I can't put on my grand manner in this poor presence."

For shame! At your own fireside you are in the most sacred spot on earth. This little audience ought to move you as deeply as the sixty thousand people who used to gather in the Roman amphitheatre. Have you any story too good to tell that group of beloved beings? Do you know where there is any crowd before whom you ought to try harder to show off all your best gifts and graces? How polite you were to those rich ladies who came into the store to buy silk dresses to-day! How charmingly you entertained those people who came to make their party call! You put your best foot forward then. Why not do it at the evening meal for the benefit of your loved ones? It seems such a pity to show everybody else the best side of your nature and them the worst. If you can be considerate and sweet tempered and charming everywhere else, why not at home?

Of course, it cannot be denied that homes are dull places sometimes. We get old and accustomed to each other. Trouble arrives to sadden us. It's very hard to rise above the atmosphere of grief and melancholy that comes with the advancing shadows of life. But we owe all the

light and sweetness there is in us to that sacred group of beings who assemble around the fireside. We built it. We gathered these people there. The responsibility of their happiness is upon our shoulders. And if we can only come home with a smile on our faces and tell them our funniest stories, sing them our best songs, show them our sweetest manners, perhaps we can transform their sadness and gloom into happiness and good cheer.

## IX

## MATRIMONIAL FRICTION TURNED TO PROFIT.



HE contact of people either in masses or couplets always generates energy. That is why in war, soldiers march in battalions; in political campaigns people assemble in mass-meetings; in religious revivals they are asked to sit close together in the pews. "Touch elbows!" is the command issued to straggling armies in dark and fearsome nights. Each individual is like an electric cell in a battery. By some mysterious law their union is multiplication instead of addition. Ten men are always more than ten times one man.

In the same way even two of the cells become a battery and, alas! sometimes battering-rams. These separate, individual lives, like two streams that have run quietly in their own channels, make a roaring maelstrom when they unite. There is a sudden development of an evil power in this

friction, of which neither they nor their friends had ever dreamed.

What is to be done with this new power? Power is always either baneful or beneficent, destructive or creative. This incessant friction, in which sparks are forever flying—what shall its mission be?

I will answer this question on the assumption that this friction is inevitable—for if life proves anything at all, it is that there are temperaments that antagonize and irritate each other by some mysterious and perhaps unalterable necessity of nature.

The thing to do with matrimonial friction is to transform it to character power. The transformation of the fierce energies of heat and light, of rushing winds and falling waters into beneficial potencies is the great problem of modern science. It is accomplished by a thousand wonderful devices, but not by any easy ones. It took immeasurable genius and illimitable consecration to discover and perfect them. Well, it is no easy thing to transform the friction of married life into beauty and strength of character, but it can be done.

No quality in the soul is nobler than that of self-control, and it is this quality that the quiet

endurance of matrimonial friction at last turns into. At first the sudden surprises of unknown traits of character, the differences of habit, of opinion, of taste, excite and irritate the young married couple. Hot words follow and quarrels develop. There are tears of bitterness and regret. Days and perhaps weeks of constraint and coldness ensue. But by and by it begins to dawn on the mind of one or both that the other is also an individual, with all an individual's right to his or her personal identity, judgment and opinion. And a sacred moment it is when that lesson is fully and finally learned. Probably nine out of ten men expect to absorb a woman's personality into their own—and the reverse. We want that other will to be submerged and swallowed up in ours. It is madness, but it is human nature. And so, when at last we see and feel the clear right of that other soul to its individuality a first great step has been taken.

A second step is taken when we finally determine to endure in silence the incurable contradictions and oppositions in the characters of our husbands and wives. We have learned that nothing but discord and strife follow the attempt to bend their wills or alter their temperaments to suit our own, and we decide to take them as

they are. This involves self-repression. It is a hard way to be taught it, but the worst education which teaches self-repression at the right time is better than the best which teaches us everything else and not that. Our poor self-love can be reconciled to the sacrifice of everything but itself. We are egotists, although each one says, "Mine is not egotism, but conscious power." And when a man at last learns to hold his own-self down and keep it from aggressive assertion of its rights he has turned into the pathway to paradise.

Complete self-mastery in matrimonial conflicts is a long and difficult acquisition. Probably it is fully acquired in the fewest possible cases. But in what multitudes of houses it is developed to such a point that daily life becomes not only endurable but blissful. Married people learn that they can control themselves in the presence of each other as well as in the presence of strangers or companions. "If I can control myself before the meanest and most aggravating boss in the world, why can't I control myself in the presence of my wife," Brown asks his conscience. "If I can govern my resentment over the cook's peculiarities, why can't I over those of my husband," Mrs. Brown inquires of her soul.

And so the friction grows less and less. Fewer sparks fly. The teeth of the cogwheels play together more smoothly and quietly. The old energy of conflict and contradiction has passed into self-control, and fine and noble character is the resultant. It may seem a harsh dispensation of Providence, but female termagants have often made male heroes, and male gadflies have often developed female saints.

At any rate, however self-mastery is acquired it is the fundamental virtue, and to-day as in antiquity, "He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city."

## X

## "MAKING ENDS MEET."



SHOULD say (offhand) that one-half of all the troubles of matrimony are matters of money. The problem of "making ends meet" "gets onto human nerves." Its solution is a stern and imperious necessity that haunts us day and night. It can never be disposed of for good and all, but recurs to-day with the same horrible complexities as yesterday, and will come back to us to-morrow just as grimly.

The manager of a mortgage and loan company told me that there are at least ten thousand families in the city of Cincinnati *tangled* up by debts to institutions like his own. This represents one-seventh of the population. Could there be any more dramatic evidence of the fierce nature of the struggle to "make ends meet?"

I have heard of a lunatic in an insane asylum who wanders about the grounds trying to bring the two ends of a rubber band together around the

trunks of the trees. The poor fellow had gone crazy trying "to make ends meet." And wasn't it quite enough to drive him mad? Think of the genius and the agony that you yourself have put into the effort, and then multiply this by the numbers of individuals in your community, and you will form some conception of the strain that is bearing on the nerves of the human race. And when you multiply, do not exempt anyone; for the rich are as hard put to it as the poor. Every time a man's wages, his salary or his profits are increased new expenses arise, just as new pests develop with the increase of vegetables in a garden. There isn't a more surprising experience in the world than the results of a "raise." The instant it comes we begin to "spread out," and so overtax our income just about as much as before. On ten thousand dollars a year men have more luxuries, but no easier time paying for them, than when living on five thousand dollars or even one thousand dollars. Whatever the scale of living we are all of us chasing our debts as a dog chases his tail.

No wonder the everlasting grind wears out our nerves. Just stop for a moment to measure the heroism revealed in this tragic struggle. Consider the self-denial, the honesty, the fidelity, the

patience, the genius that go into the task of a workingman and his wife who have to rear a family on a dollar and a half a day, and you will be surprised that there are so many happy and virtuous homes in the world rather than that there are so few.

There are four or five combinations which affect the success or failure of people to make ends meet.

I. A woman is extravagant when a man is economical, and they get into debt. The agent of the mortgage company says that this is not the case in most of the homes of the poor, and to this the superintendent of a great insurance company agreed. If the men would give their wages to their wives, affairs would be greatly improved, they think. Probably in the better-to-do classes, where women are treated as darlings rather than helpmeets, it is different.

II. A man is extravagant when the woman is economical, and they are bankrupted.

III. Both are thrifty, and they become misers.

IV. Both are spendthrifts, and they go to ruin.

Now measure, if you can, the irritations of such possible relationships. A man "toils and moils" and sees his hard earnings scattered like chaff by his family. By and by he gets sensi-

tive, and then morose. "What do they care for me? All they value the old man for is to earn money for them to spend. I may wear myself out and drop in my harness, and their only feeling will be one of indignation," he says to himself, until love dies in his heart.

Or a woman who longs for the noble life that only thrift can procure, sees her husband frittering away his money on cigars or dropping it into slot-machines, while she and the children have scant share of the very necessities of life, and she broods over it until she becomes embittered.

Reproaches begin to be heard. Quarrelling follows. Then comes separation or the divorce court.

Now this is what I have to say: If people want happy homes they must arrive at a mutual agreement about the use of money. There are certain inexorable laws which they break at their peril. Along the path of obedience to these laws, and along that path alone, they may travel to the goal of domestic felicity.

1. We must live within our incomes.
2. We must save something for emergencies.
3. We must agree absolutely as to the objects of expenditure.
4. Neither one of us may indulge in a purely selfish luxury.

5. Whoever handles the money ought to give the other an "allowance."

Perhaps the last is not the least, for nothing in the world so humiliates and degrades a grown-up person as to keep asking for little driblets of money. The man who does not give his wife an allowance does her a gross injustice and dwarfs his own soul. She never ought to have to beg. He never ought to question her honesty or her judgment. He never ought to dole out money to his wife as if she were a dependent. Such a woman summoned up her courage one day and asked her husband if he wouldn't take her to the theatre with him. His eyes widened, and he replied in tones of solemn indignation: "Don't I always tell you what I've seen and heard when I come home? What more do you want?"

A man ought to be a gentleman, to be married.

Nothing is more imperative and nothing more difficult than for husbands and wives to arrive at this perfect understanding about the use of their income. I have known of a woman whose heart was broken into little bits because her husband told her that she was not "saving." She confounded the word "saving" with "economy," and felt insulted. She was economical, but not saving. "Economy" makes money go a long way,

but "saving" lands it in the bank. "Economy" is good, but it is "saving" that turns rainy days to sunshine. Women are likely to be economical and not saving, men to be saving and not economical.

The expenditure of money is as sacred a matter as the expenditure of strength or time.

Hear the conclusion of the whole matter: No home will be happy where money is not expended wisely.

## XI

## SACRIFICING HOME TO BUSINESS.

THERE is always danger of castigating an innocent party when one becomes a social critic. The pupils of one of the head masters of Eton have recorded of him that he found a row of boys standing in his study one morning, and without a moment's hesitation began to thrash them with his cane. They were too terrified to remonstrate until he had gone half-way down the line, when one of them plucked up courage enough to falter out: "Please, sir, we're not up for punishment; we are the confirmation class."

Most of the men upon whom the blows I am about to administer will fall may prove to be "domestic models," but I must strike out with the hope of hitting a guilty one among the innocent, now and then.

There is a vicious circle in the reasoning of the modern business man. "I want to make a happy home," he says, "and so must conduct a success-

ful business; but to do this, I must give myself to it body and soul."

By sacrificing himself to his business, he renders himself incapable of making a home. And he does it in this way: The best energies of his heart and mind are absorbed to such a degree in the conduct of some great commercial enterprise that he has nothing to contribute to domestic life when he comes home at night, like a squeezed orange.

The energies of men are not like those of a river. The water that turns the wheel of a factory is exactly as able to turn that of a grist-mill a quarter of a mile farther down the stream. But the man who has poured out the last drop of his strength on the wheel of his business simply goes home empty to his family.

Among the most pitiful spectacles in this world, I put that of the haggard, exhausted man of affairs sitting helpless and useless in the circle about the fireside. If he is not so nervous and fretful as to forbid all merriment, he is so used up that he cannot enjoy it. If he realizes his condition he decorates his face with a smile; but it is at best no better than a petrification. His mind is not on the scene or the subject. His thoughts are down at the shop or the store. He scarcely hears the children when they speak.

Later in the evening his wife may try to engage his attention upon some problem of the domestic life. Billy has not been behaving well at school, or Mary is begging to take music lessons, or Bridget has "given notice," or most likely gone off without saying "Good-bye."

She does her best, poor woman, but even while she is talking she knows by the look of his eye that his mind is wandering.

"You aren't listening to a word I say. You don't care any more about your home than if it were a boarding-house," she snaps.

"I guess if you had all my big burdens on your mind you'd find it as hard as I do to listen to tittle-tattle," he replies.

"Who asks you to burden yourself in this way? I'm sure I don't."

"Talk is cheap. You want an establishment, and it takes money to keep it up. You ought to know that a man can't earn money without the concentration of all his strength on business."

"For my part, I would rather have less money and more husband."

"Nonsense!"

"It's little enough you know about a woman's heart. What I long for beyond all earthly things is your love and your sympathy. I need you

to help me discipline the children. I want you to be interested in my household cares. I long to hear your old gay laugh. I hate that store. I hate business, I'm sick and tired of money and position. I want my lover back. I want to feel that he hears me when I speak. Can't you understand?"

"Eh? What? Excuse me, but I wasn't listening. I just happened to think of an order for one hundred dozen suits of underwear that I'll bet a twenty-dollar bill that stupid shipping clerk has forgotten."

Pitiful, isn't it? What are we going to do about it? It's getting worse all the time. There is so much truth in what the man says about the exactions of business that we cannot help pitying him. To succeed (or even not to fail) a man must keep strained up like a fiddle-string. His competitors are after him with a knife and tomahawk day and night. If they would only be reasonable—he could. But they won't. The whole pack are as mad as March hares. There seems to be no "middle way" to-day. A man must either "get rich" or "go broke," and that in a mighty hurry. He must either march at the head of the procession or get out of the ranks entirely.

Nevertheless, the dilemma remains. This man must give more time to his home or he won't have



THE JOY OF PARENTHOOD. (See page 43.)

any. What he has now isn't a home. It's only a house. If he has to sacrifice one thing or the other, he had better sacrifice the business to the home than the home to the business. And if he says, "How can you have a home without a business," the answer is, "A simpler home with a less exacting business."

More love, more peace, more of the bliss of the fireside is what this age needs—not more fine clothes, bob-tailed horses and long-tailed gowns.

Doesn't it sometimes seem as if we had lost our minds? One time a kindly old clergyman stopped by the side of a laboring man who was turning at a windlass, bare-headed, beneath a blazing sun. "Hey, man," said he, "working without your hat is bad for your brains." "Faith, your riverence," he replied, "if it's any brains I had, I wouldn't be working at this windlass at all!"

Sometimes when I catch myself and other dunces like me tearing along at breakneck speed, eager, impetuous, absorbed, struggling for pleasure or prizes that turn to ashes in our grasp and sacrificing the joys of home to attain them, I think we have as few brains as the Irishman. For I know (as well as I know my A, B, C's) that undue absorption in business means the almost inevitable destruction of home.

## XII

## SHOULD THE WIFE OBEY HUSBAND?



HAVE performed hundreds of marriage ceremonies, but have only asked one bride to promise obedience to her husband. I did this because she insisted upon it, and I have never had the heart to ask her whether she was glad. Probably not one American woman in ten thousand has any intention of obeying her husband in the sense contemplated in the marriage service, and so what is the use of asking her to promise what she does not mean to perform? It always seems to me dishonest.

The real problem of matrimony is not obedience but deference. There is a certain subordination, submission, recognition of superiority in both friendship and marriage that is of the utmost importance.

The case stands this way:

Either the man and woman have equally strong wills and good judgment, which is a very great

improbability; or the man has the higher endowment in these qualities, or, perchance, the woman.

Now the most important question for every young couple is the early discovery of this superiority and its constant recognition. The little home kingdom needs to be ruled by the noblest mind for the domestic state thrives best under an aristocratic form of government. But here's the "rub." In the vast majority of cases it is the one who has the least sense who has the most egotism, and the married life becomes one long struggle on the part of the weaker member of the firm to assert his or her personality. Our "personality!" How we dread to have it swallowed up or even subordinated. And it would be a terrible thing to really lose it in another; to have one's will and judgment so completely absorbed in that of a husband or a wife as really to become a *nobody*.

This tragedy often happens in the married life. You have seen women who were nothing in the world but little echoes of some big, blustering, domineering man. You have seen six-foot men who were wagged like a tail by little, aggressive, capable and determined women.

Losing one's individuality in this way is like being sucked down into quicksand. It would

have been ignoble in Solomon's weakest wife to have thus surrendered her personality even to the wisest of men.

And it is the instinctive fear of this ignoble surrender that often lies at the bottom of lifelong matrimonial unhappiness. A man or woman makes the slow, painful discovery of his or her inferiority and it is humiliating beyond words. It is something to be covered up, to be denied, to be resented. In the blind struggle against the inevitable, self-assertion is the last resort. What this inferior mind lacks in greatness it must make up for by obstinacy and aggressiveness. Day after day and year after year it struggles for supremacy by this fatal method, always developing its egotism at the expense of its judgment; always sacrificing its best interests to avert its threatened loss.

This is a very subtle but very common and very terrible evil in married life. Few such people have the metaphysical acumen to understand their own motives or the operation of their own minds. It is a blind, instinctive and desperate struggle for existence—the existence of the personality. The fear of being mentally absorbed is like the fear of being bodily devoured. And there is a genuine basis for the apprehension, for

it is a characteristic of all superior minds, or most of them, to swallow up inferior ones. Power descends into tyranny as rivers descend into the sea. There is a deep and terrible joy in dominating minds that are beneath us. It is this delight that turns men into brutes and women into vipers.

But if it is a real danger (and a danger to be avoided) that the very personality of the weaker partner should be swallowed up and extinguished, it is a still greater one that it should become a self-assertive and savage egotist. And the simple truth of the matter is that home after home has been wrecked because some vain or stupid man or woman was not willing to acknowledge the superiority of a nobler mind. Stop for a moment and think of the homes you have seen shipwrecked on this rock. Stop and inquire whether it may not be the peril of your own.

But why should it be so terrible to acknowledge that your husband is nobler and larger than yourself? Be thankful if it is so. Try to climb up on his broad shoulders and see the world through his eyes. What an opportunity to be in such close contact with an intelligence and a character so much greater than your own. If you are modest and simple and true to yourself, he will not crush

you; he will elevate you. He will not bully you; he will enlighten you. Bend your proud little neck to the yoke of his judgment. Be less assertive and aggressive. Sit at his feet and learn. If it becomes necessary—obey. Sometimes his mind has so much wider sweep than yours that it will be far better for you to be like a child than a wife.

And there are women whose judgments exceed their husbands' in the same way. It is harder for a man to admit it, of course. But why should a man prefer smashing his home to yielding to the swift, clear intuitions of a wife whom God has enriched with that noblest of all human endowments—insight? It is tough, no doubt, to acknowledge that this little fair-haired woman whom you made such boasts of cherishing and protecting and defending should reveal a capacity that throws all your moderate talents into the shade. But how great a blessing her gifts might be to you. Be humble in their presence. Give them your reverence. Do not be a sneak and a puppy, and do not dangle after her like some august divinity. But thank heaven that you have those clear eyes to see through, and if you have been wrecking your business prospects and mismanaging your family affairs, sit quietly at

the feet of this little sight-seeing woman and learn the deeper truths which she beholds by some divination that you know not of.

Terminate that fearful struggle of a brute will with a high intelligence. Cease that futile and disastrous self-assertion. Do not cringe and truckle like a slave, but offer a genuine and noble deference to mental and moral superiority.

## XIII

## "PULLING TOGETHER."



HEN two streams of water meet they flow to the sea together. Whether both are of the same volume or one is large enough to swallow the other whole, their direction is always identical. Hand in hand, heart to heart, they move amicably between the same banks toward the same goal.

But it is not often so with two human lives. At rare intervals it happens that their aims and hopes are so nearly identical as to melt into a single stream of tendencies and glide along like a meadow brook among the grasses. More often they suddenly discover that their motives, habits, and purposes are dissimilar if not antagonistic. One tries to flow this way and the other that, and so the waters rave and fret.

It is at this critical point of the married life that the stern lesson of this brief essay needs to be brought home. Two people who do not pull

together will soon begin to pull apart, and it is necessary for them to learn how to make concessions.

Take, for example, their "tastes." How seldom you find two people in whom they are similar. One likes to read, and the other to play games. One is fond of the seashore and the other of the mountains. One likes to go to parties and the other to stay at home. These differences seem the merest trifles before marriage, and are the subjects of good-humored jests. But if a wife insists on dragging her husband to receptions and card parties when he is tired out with business, there will soon be trouble in the camp. Or if a woman likes to read good books and her husband will never listen to anything but the suicides, murders and embezzlements in the yellow journals—a breach will spring up that will widen till their death. More homes than the statisticians have ever counted have been broken or rendered permanently wretched by differences of taste as trifling as these.

What a selfish thing it is in a man not to conform to his wife's love for little things which do not interest him. Of course, you don't like fancy work, but is that any reason why you should not learn to? Lay down your paper or your book

and take up that pretty tidy or napkin that your Mary is embroidering. Show your appreciation of her right to be interested in whatever strikes her fancy. Come out of yourself and see things from a woman's point of view. She is a woman, and this basal fact must be reckoned with. Or, perhaps the shoe is on the other foot and it is the man who has an incurable love for hunting and fishing. Both pastimes are distasteful to his wife, and with the imperious will of a little tyrant she tries to uproot his natural instincts. But who gave her the right to dictate in such matters? He is a man and has the privileges of his sex for the rough life of the out-of-door world. How much better it would be for her to don her short skirts and take to the woods with him.

But there are more serious differences than those of "taste." There are differences of principles. They do not reveal themselves before the marriage vows are taken. Each of the infatuated lovers has softened or concealed those traits and ideas that excited the antagonism of the other. It was easy to put them out of sight during courtship. But now that the honeymoon is over and they have settled down to the daily grind of life, nature begins to reassert itself. It appears that the man has a deep-seated antipathy

to religion, while the woman is a devoted Christian. She begs him to go to church, but he refuses and insists on her taking rides into the country or visiting beer gardens. First come the sharp surprises; then the deep heart sorrows, and finally the open quarrels. Two wills have set themselves in violent antagonism. Two lives are pulling apart. "It is the little rift within the lute that by and by will make the music mute and ever widening slowly silence all."

Somebody must give way. Can anyone tell us who? My answer is this—sharp, sincere and earnest—the one with whom the preference is not a matter of conscience. This present question is not that fundamental one of the truth or falsity of religion. It is simply the question as to whether a man has the right to despise and trample on the deepest sensibility of the soul of that person whose claims upon his respect and reverence are the holiest things in life. Suppose that religion were the mere superstition that some men think it is—what right has he who refuses to let his wife interfere with his smoking or drinking or gambling to deny her the privilege of going to church on Sunday and listening to the advocacy of ideas which are dearer to her than life itself? Nothing was ever more unjust; nothing was ever

more contemptible than such tyranny. When I recall the brutal selfishness that I have seen men show in such denials of the right of private judgment and personal preference to their wives it makes my blood boil! It is the most vulgar form of tyranny to refuse a woman these privileges and to draw her off against her will to places from which her whole moral sense revolts. It seems as if any man with a love of "fair play" would perceive the injustice, and that anyone possessing "common-sense" would see the fatality of such abuse of power.

Be courteous. Be chivalrous. Be reverent toward an awakened conscience. If you do not, one of two things will happen. Either the conscience will be destroyed or the heart will revolt. In the one case you will have an immoral woman for your wife and in the other will have lost her love.

Does it follow that a woman must adopt the ways of a man whose habits are loose because it is required of a man that he make concessions to her conscientious scruples? Alas! she does it at her peril. It is better to sacrifice home and even life itself than to abate one jot or tittle of a true matter of conscience.

What problems open when we resolutely face

the duties of the married life. What dangers threaten its happiness. How plainly some of its great principles stand out to view. Among them, there is none clearer than this one—that if you do not pull together you will pull apart.

Can you afford to sacrifice a happy home for the sake of some selfish or stubborn whim? Will you give up all the joy of the married life for the gratification of some single desire? How much better to repress your longings for that pleasure whose gratification is being purchased at such a cost and learn how to enjoy the pleasures of your wife or husband.

Bring your ideas together. Cultivate the same tastes. Seek the same objects in life. Make concessions. Make sacrifices of everything (but your noblest selves) to get into line and pull together. It is in this way alone that people achieve the glory of their "golden weddings."

## XIV

## RESIGNATION OR DIVORCE.



VERYWHERE the divorce mill keeps grinding. The solemn spectacle of homes wrecked and hearts broken by the thousand, every year raises the most startling questions about the relations of the sexes. But this is not a general discussion of abstract principles nor a criticism of existing conditions. It is an appeal to individual men and women who have made the terrible discovery that the happiness of which they dreamed through marriage has been blasted by the incompatibility of their temperaments. In all human life there is no greater tragedy. The slow crystallization of this suspicion into certainty is like losing one's life blood drop by drop. In all such experiences the burning question is: What shall we do—endure the bitter disappointment and the ceaseless sorrow with meek resignation, or disrupt the hateful bond?

Undoubtedly the former alternative is the true

one, but with what a wild protest it is repudiated by these tortured human hearts. "We have been defrauded of life's greatest enjoyment," they exclaim. "We have a right to be happy and are not. By what principle of justice can we be required to pass our lives without happiness?" This is an exceedingly bitter cry. It is wrung from bleeding hearts. It raises a question that must be answered in accordance with the eternal rightness in the nature of things.

In the first place, such sufferers are bound to remember that to some great degree (whose limits may not be accurately defined) their individual happiness must be subordinated to the good of the State. This is a principle against which the soul struggles in vain. The same mysterious obligation that incites men to suffer wounds and death for the good of their country on the battle-field ought to incite them to suffer marital unhappiness, if need be, for the benefit of society. It is easy to resent and repudiate this duty, but it is impossible to deny it. The frightful increase of divorces is a national peril. The very existence of righteousness in the State is threatened by it. Not a citizen is exempt from the responsibility this involves. The Tories of the Revolution and the Copperheads of the Rebellion were not a whit

more false to their country than are the people who, for trivial and contemptible reasons, threaten the stability of our Government by breaking its most solemn contract and spreading the fatal pestilence of easy divorces.

In the second place, the people who are contemplating divorce ought to realize what pusillanimity and selfishness prompt the vast majority of these unholy disruptions of the marriage bond. It was only a few days ago that a man petitioned for a divorce "because his wife was getting old and he wanted a younger one." And this is scarcely more contemptible than the motives that secretly prompt the majority of the people who break this sacred tie. In some form or other it is almost always self-love. People whine and say, "We are not happy." Well, in the name of God, *be* happy! You have as good a chance as the vast majority. Nine out of ten of the couples that have at last achieved peace have won it against exactly the same sort of odds which you are encountering. "A right to be happy!" One gets tired of this childish plaint. What most people want of life is happiness without effort. What most people seek in marriage is the adoration and slavery of the person whom they marry. Men marry women to have them purr, caress and coddle them. Women



"Home Sweet Home." (See page 66.)

marry men to have them dress, pet and flatter them. Untrained to high moral obligations, insensible to sublime ideals, incapable of self-control, they enter into the "holy" estate of matrimony absolutely and solely for their own pleasure. No wonder they make shipwreck of it. This is not true of all people who find married life unendurable, but it most unquestionably is true of the vast masses, and it is not irreverent to say that even the Divine Power is incapable of making such people happy. The trouble with nine out of ten of all the couples who find their marriage unendurable is either that they are mad because the other party to the contract is not willing to be a slave, or that they themselves are not willing to pull their share of the load. It is self-love that is making marriage the despair of the age.

If you are unhappy and desperate, take another tack. Abandon your old scheme of happiness. Do not any longer try to achieve it by attempting to extort it from your husband or your wife. Try to get it by self-sacrifice. Try to get it by giving it. Divorce will not insure it, for you will take that same selfish heart into another alliance.

But even if you have exhausted every power in trying to make your married life a blessing, do not disrupt it except for that last, final and suffi-

cient reason, infidelity to the sacred vow. You know your present ills, but you do not know what you are flying to. If you cannot dwell under the same roof, then live apart. But remember that marriage is a sacred thing. There is a mystery in it. A certain holiness inheres in that strange relationship. It carries its own avenger in its bosom. We may not lightly trifle with its august nature. Think of the dangers of divorce; think of its disgrace; think of its possible regrets; contemplate its almost certain self-reproaches.

It is best to be patient and resigned. Whatever we may say, individual happiness is not the object of existence in this life. To do one's duty is the supreme obligation. It is right to desire happiness and to labor for it. But it is sheer idiocy to be mad and frantic because we do not find it. There are no marriages or very few where it has not been secured by never-ending self-abnegation and effort. And even where happiness (the gushing, exuberant happiness of the rare, ideal marriages) occurs without effort, it is because those hearts were unselfish to begin with.

Of course, it is a terrible thing to be defrauded of the joy of an ideal married life. But it is a terrible thing to be defrauded of other joys. Whose heart is not at certain wild moments of desire and

unreason mad with the consciousness of the bliss we miss in life? But this emotion is wicked and sinful to the last degree. No matter what we possess, there is always more that we want. No husband and no wife has all the traits we covet. No man's wife is so young and beautiful and brilliant but that, if his heart is wrong, he may not in his neighbor's home see a youth or a beauty or a brilliance that shall make him feel that he has been defrauded.

Quiet acceptance, patient endurance, submissive resignation—these are best.

## XV

## "MAKING UP."



HAVE heard married folks affirm with great solemnity, "We never had a quarrel." But I always wonder if they do not mean a "fight." That is easy enough, of course; but a "quarrel." How in the world can two people with any force of character and any strong convictions about life get along for a quarter of a century (or more) without some sort of clash that produces altercation and estrangement? They surely must be angels or rabbits. There are so many things in daily life that put us out of temper.

Fatigue brings on quarrels. The whole world looks so dark to a woman when she has washed and ironed and baked, all in the same day. Every bone in her body aches. There is a numbness in the base of her brain. Her head throbs. The slightest noise goes through her nerves like the firing of a cannon. Poor old John! If he happens to forget the oysters to-night he is liable to hear

from it. For Mary isn't herself. So, don't get *overtired.*

Worry brings on quarrels. If John has a note coming due, or has just received a bill which he had forgotten all about, or has had a strike in his mill, he hardly knows the difference between a kiss and a cuff. So, don't *worry.*

A thousand other things bring on quarrels, and sometimes they just seem to come on of themselves. How hard it is for us to find another will running across our own like a mill-race through a garden. How hard it is to deal daily with opinions and habits differing antipodally from those we have cherished longest. How hard it is to be always yielding and giving up to someone else. To what two people did life ever look the same? Whoever saw a couple whose opinions did not often clash?

It would be sublime if people never did quarrel; but they do, and, therefore, it is a matter of the gravest importance that they should know how to "make up" afterward. No quarrel is ever rightly "made up" without these two things—downright confession and whole-hearted forgiveness. They are "patched up," but not "made up." The wound is hidden, but not healed, unless the offender gets down on his marrow-bones, and the

offended one bestows a gracious pardon. It is psychologically impossible for it to be otherwise. You might as well try to heal a sword gash without bringing the edges of the wound together; or solder lead pipes without rosin. God has ordained and decreed it to be as it is, and quarrels that are not settled by confession and pardon leave the barb of the arrow in the wound, even if the shaft is drawn. This fact is not understood or else it is ignored, and the result is bitterness, agony and sometimes divorce.

As I firmly believe that the art of "making up" is essential to domestic happiness, I want to try and analyze its two elements, Confession and Pardon.

1. Confession.

The confession of a wrong is a spiritual necessity to the one who perpetrates it. You may wish it was not so. People wish they could escape toothache without filling or extraction, but Nature has willed it otherwise. No wrongdoer ever feels a true self-respect without confession. He realizes that he ought to admit his error and that nothing but obstinacy restrains him. It is ignominious and cowardly not to do it, and he is ashamed of himself. This mortification must be repressed in order to secure his mental rest, and so he puts on a bold front and bluffs it down—an act which

stimulates his egotism and hardens his heart. He becomes proud, cold and brutal. All his finer feelings die.

Confession is also a necessity for the victim of the wrong. The soul suffers as the body does. Pain is the fundamental element in self-preservation. If it did not hurt to be insulted and wronged we should become the passive victims of injustice and wrong. It does hurt, and this hurt has but a single healing lotion. We dream of relief through revenge, but it is only a dream. Revenge embitters and hardens. There is only one balm, and that is the acknowledgment of the wrong by the one who has inflicted the wound. Nothing is more mysterious and wonderful than the curative power of confession. It soothes the pain and draws the poison from the sore. It is water on fire and oil on water.

Are you one of those hard, savage, brutal people who never back down; never admit an error; never acknowledge a fault? Nothing can be more base and nothing more wicked. If you have been unfair and unjust, go and make a clean breast of it, for an "open confession is good for the soul."

2. Pardon.

But forgiveness is as imperative a necessity as "confession." It is passing strange, but it is un-

equivocally true, that a quarrel cannot be made up without a pardon. The heart that has been hurt can be relieved and restored to its original state of good-will only when that divine sentiment has exuded, as gums exude from wounded trees. The sense of injustice is drained out by the act of pardon. If you refuse to forgive, you will feel unworthy and be unhappy. And as for the one who has acknowledged the fault, nothing is more certain than that he will be exasperated by your not forgiving him. It is humiliating enough to confess, but it is maddening not to be forgiven. And yet, in spite of this psychological law, some people pride themselves in being vindictive. "We forgive, but we never forget," they say—too stupid to perceive the contradiction. To forgive *is* to forget. The soul that freely pardons gradually loses the painful memory of the wound.

This spiritual "confession and pardon" is the most beautiful phenomenon in nature. It is the cure for all mental unhappiness. Hearts capable of performing these two sublime acts will love forever. The deepest and sweetest experiences of their lives will be "making up" their quarrels. Just as divided electric currents reunite when passing through two poles of a battery, their love will mingle through confession and pardon.

## XVI

## CURING YOUR "PARTNER'S" FAULTS.

AND so, you young "engaged" people think you can "make each other over" after you are married? Ah! perhaps you also think you can cure a cat from scratching, a dog from biting, and a horse from balking. You evidently know but little about the vitality and obstinacy of personal characteristics. When a young girl talks glibly about reforming a drunkard, we old fellows who know life must be pardoned if we heave a sigh. When a young man confides in us that his sweetheart is a flirt, but that he proposes to "take it out of her" after the wedding day, we cannot help shaking our heads. If you want to make any great change in your loved one, you had better try it before the wedding ceremony. It will certainly be easier then than later on. Remember, please, that though you do your hair up in curl papers every night, it always unkinks on the following day. The old proverb does not say—as the wife inclines the husband bends.

## Curing Your "Partner's" Faults

Ask people who have been married twenty-five or thirty years whether they have ever succeeded in effecting any great alterations in each other's character. Ninety-nine out of a hundred will answer emphatically, "No." What they have all observed is the constant intensification of original characteristics. Or, where great changes have come, they are not along the lines they had marked out. The fact of the matter is (however little to our credit) human nature resents deliberate efforts at alteration by others. Constant and reiterated criticism and correction anger us and produce an obstinate reaction. We can change little children but not "grown-ups." "It is hard to teach an old dog new tricks." Let a woman tell her husband three times a day "not to eat with his knife," and at the end of a month he will probably throw his fork out of the window. Let a woman ask her husband every time he goes out-of-doors if he has brushed his hair, and some night he will come home with it shaved close to his head. Too much and too oft-repeated criticism raises an evil spirit in us.

One time a man bought a parrot that had been advertised to say the word "uncle" at any time and as often as called upon. He took the bird home, invited some of his friends to din-

ner and afterward tried to exhibit the parrot's talents.

"Say 'uncle,'" he said.

The bird cocked his head on one side and looked wise, but kept resolutely silent. Ten times he repeated his exhortation, and then, losing his temper, wrung the bird's neck and threw it out of the window, supposing it to be dead.

The next morning he heard a peculiar noise in the garden, and, going out, discovered the parrot in a coop where he had a brood of valuable chickens. The solemn-visaged bird was holding one of them in his claws and shouting in an excited voice, "Say 'uncle,' say 'uncle.'"

As the poor little pullet refused to do so, the parrot wrung its neck and threw it out of the coop, and on the ground were the dead bodies of nine of the brood.

If parrots and chickens won't say "uncle" just because we tell them to, neither will husbands or wives.

The bottom facts about the influence of married people over each other are these: influence here (as everywhere) is largely unconscious. What we really try to do, we fail to accomplish. If we alter each other at all, it is in unexpected ways and

almost invariably by example and not by criticism or suggestion.

Did you ever happen to notice that the marriage ceremony does not say "Will you 'make' each other better or worse, but "Will you 'take' each other for better or for worse." There is nothing better worth remembering than this—that we "take" each other for what we are, and not for what we can "make" each other to become. Nothing but disappointment and unhappiness can result from these nagging efforts to alter the characteristics and dispositions of our husbands and wives. It is easy not only to drive them into open rebellion, but to goad ourselves into unhappiness over their most trivial defects.

Suppose a man's wife has a snub nose. He has to put up with it, doesn't he? Could anything be more foolish than for him to say, "Until this woman gets that snub out of her nose I will not even enjoy her pretty hair and beautiful teeth." You may reply that this is a physical and irremediable defect, but that her bad grammar or her carelessness about her attire is not. Well, you may argue as you will, your dilemma remains the same. You can either overlook a defect you cannot cure and enjoy virtues that

are real and beautiful, or you can keep nagging away at this one defect until you are both mad, and the happiness has all gone out of your home.

Of course, there are vices of the soul which I do not believe we are called upon to endure in one another. There are even minor deficiencies of nature against which we ought perhaps to make a resolute stand. But these are only the exceptions.

The rule is, take each other as you are. Overlook the imperfections that you cannot cure. Keep your thoughts away from them. Pass them by. There are quiet, gentle ways of exerting a pressure on the bad habit, if you only do not let it irritate you and make your heart unhappy. But it is a thousand times better to let it alone and forget it. Just keep thinking about all those other good and noble qualities.

Isn't it a dreadful thing to see a super-refined and hypercritical woman allowing herself to be exasperated by her husband's habit of picking his teeth, to such a degree that his devotion, purity, unselfishness, courage and honor are all forced into an eclipse? The habit is a bad one—yes. But it isn't bad enough to justify your roiling his temper and rousing the devil that lies buried in his heart. And it isn't bad enough to

warrant your getting that excitable spirit of yours all perturbed. Just try and remember how easy it is to become critical and how like a maggot the fault-finding disposition grows.

"He is the half-part of a blessed man, left to be finished by such as she; and she a fair, divided excellence, whose fulness of perfection lies in him."

"Love in marriage should be the accomplishment of a beautiful dream, and not, as it too often proves—the end."

## XVII

## QUESTIONABLE STORIES.



HEN a war vessel blows up in a harbor, especially in the vicinity of Port Arthur, it is safe to believe that a torpedo has done the mischief. But when a home breaks up in a community, the neighbors are left to guess which one of the hundred secret vices was to blame.

There is one such vice that seldom comes to light even in the most public trials for divorce. In fact, the principals in the tragedy may not themselves be able to trace the final disaster to its true root. But every close student of human life has, over and over again, seen the most sacred ties broken by the curse of the "impure story."

One of the first misdemeanors committed by the average man in his married life is that of telling his young bride some unseemly joke that he has heard from the companions of his bachelor days. There may be women who are used to this form of wit and have a natural relish for it, but

they are few and far between, and it is only her timidity and the natural fear of offending her husband that prevent the average American girl from showing the disgust she feels at hearing this first exhibition of coarseness from the man she has just promised to "love, cherish and obey."

It would be a heroic and worthy act on the part of every young bride to nip that habit in the bud with a fine flash of anger and to forbid her husband telling her any story after her marriage that he would not tell her before. For if she listens once she is lost. Nothing is more natural and inevitable than for a man to judge a woman by himself. If his own heart is impure he believes the same elements are only dormant, if not really active, in his wife's. If, therefore, she laughs out of *consideration* he thinks she does it out of *approbation*, and tells her another and another until she has lost the right to protest.

Has anyone ever measured the corrupting power of impure stories? They spoil after-dinner speeches. They pollute the very atmosphere of students' rooms and business men's offices. No man who actually rolls a filthy joke like a sweet morsel under his tongue can be a Christian gentleman. This hideous vice is nothing better than the turkey buzzard's love for carrion.

But if the influence of this accursed style of wit is so destructive of genuine manhood, what must be its influence upon womanhood. For at last women become infected with the virus. No one is absolutely immune. The constant hearing of these stories at first blunts sensibilities and afterward creates a relish, for women can be taught to love the morbid and the horrible in spite of their sex. Gradually the finer fibres of their moral natures are broken down, and they begin to tell the stories to which they formerly only listened. By and by the blush of modesty is gone, and they tolerate and even enjoy the innuendoes of a low class of men in mixed society. But it is only a single step from the toleration of a vile suggestion in public to one in private. The woman who permits a man to see a gleam of enjoyment in her eye at some coarse speech in a crowd has only herself to blame if he makes another when she is alone. Everywhere and at all times a low tone of conversation breeds a low tone of morals, and most people dare *do* the things they *talk* about.

The curse of the impure story lies in the holding up of sacred things to ridicule, for ridicule is the deadliest foe of holiness. When the Romans began to laugh at their sacred chickens, the

imperial city fell. When children are permitted to make fun of the church and the Bible, religion is doomed. When the sexes begin to jest about the holy mysteries of manhood and womanhood, the days of virtue are numbered.

The home is built upon the corner-stone of virtue. And can you wonder that loose ideas about the latter destroy the former? Many a man who cultivated his wife's taste for an impure story has only himself to thank when, at last, he discovers nothing but dead coals in the ashes of a once happy fireside.

I firmly believe that every wife ought to take a strong stand about this matter. She ought to refuse to laugh. She ought to refuse to smile. Let her even refuse to listen, for nothing was ever gained by hearing such a story under any circumstances. Decent people are always shocked. The person who tells it experiences regret. The effect of it is always degrading. Are there not enough pure things to laugh at? Every phase of our life has its comic aspect, and we ought to train ourselves to perceive humor and hail it with laughter, but only when it is pure. There is almost as much of heaven in a hearty laugh as in an earnest prayer. "Morally considered, laughter is next to the ten commandments."



PULLING TOGETHER. (See page 76.)

# Questionable Stories

We can laugh too much, although the most of us do not laugh enough; but we can no more jest at God and death and the sexual mysteries without being corrupted than we can eat henbane or nux vomica without being poisoned.

## XVIII

## OBSERVING CONVENTIONALITIES.

A HUSKY young Westerner came to Chicago to make his fortune, and did it. At last he fell in love with a young woman in one of the upper circles of the social world and married her.

In their new home the husband felt himself to be rightfully emancipated from some of the conventionalities which he had been compelled to observe during his courtship, and one sultry spring morning sat down at the breakfast table without his coat. The young bride was shocked and ventured a mild protest.

"But I'm hot," he said.

"Yes, I know, dear, but it's not good form."

"Hang form. Can't a fellow do as he wants to in his own home?"

"Not at the expense of the proprieties of cultivated society."

"Propriety! I hate that word. Out West we go in for comfort. Propriety is only a synonym

for misery. If a fellow can't sit down in his shirt-sleeves in his own dining-room when he's hot, he's no better than a slave."

This terminated the conversation, for his shrewd little wife knew a trick worth two of useless argument with a headstrong man. But at breakfast on the following morning she appeared at the table without her dress-waist, and her husband nearly had a fit.

"Good Lord!" he gasped, "you aren't going to eat your breakfast in that rig?"

"Why not? It's unbearably hot, and I go in for comfort. It's bad enough to be the slave of 'convention' in other people's houses. In my own, I propose to do as I please."

"But the maid will be here in a minute."

"Yes, hand me the bell and I'll ring for her."

"Somebody will see you through the window."

"My home is my castle."

"Heavens! You don't mean that you are actually going to sit through this meal half-dressed?"

"Certainly."

"I surrender," he cried, grabbing his coat from the back of a chair and throwing it over her shoulders as he heard the waitress at the door.

The shoe was on the other foot.

## Observing Conventionalities

No. We cannot do as we please, even in our own home, at the expense of the conventionalities of polite society. The domestic anarchist is a public peril, as well as the political.

No man has a right to spit on the floor, put his feet on the mantel, eat with his knife, chew a toothpick in the parlor, go through the door before his wife, smoke in the presence of guests to whom tobacco is offensive, and a thousand other things, just because "he is in his own home."

A man's home is his castle, but not his cuspidor nor his barn. I say no "man," not "gentleman," because I do not intentionally address only the devotees of fashion. These essays are written to the plain folk who compose the great mass of the common people, to the men and to the women of the "rank and file." I hate a "propriety"-ridden society as much as anyone. There are purely artificial forms and conventions in every social system which are merciless tyrannies, and, like boiled eggs, no good until broken. But, on the other hand, there are customs founded on certain facts and principles about life that demand universal recognition. There may be a wide diversity of opinion as to what they are; they may vary somewhat in different localities; but just as there

is a universal code of good morals, there is a universal code of good manners.

Now it is the civilizing and humanizing power of these good manners for which I plead. There isn't a miner's cabin, nor a workman's cottage, nor a fisherman's hut, where they ought not to be scrupulously observed. Life would not only be finer, but it would be happier if they were. There isn't a human being on earth that would not feel more respectable and comfortable (after he had gotten used to it) with his face washed, his hair combed and his teeth brushed. And there isn't anyone who would not be nobler and feel happier to obey that simple code of the customs of good society which has at last taken permanent shape in our American life. It is not my mission to define that code, but only to appeal for obedience. And I believe with all possible conviction that the home life of common people, to whom "style" in the ordinary sense of the word is utterly impossible, would go ten times as smoothly and agreeably if "the proprieties" were scrupulously observed. It is really pitiful for a careful student of life to see how many humble homes lack this single transfiguring element. The machinery itself is good, but it squeaks as it runs, just for lack of a little oil. The inmates do not realize this.

They think the squeak is in the essayist, in the self-constituted critic and censor, and that if he would keep still everything would be all right.

Once upon a time a ventriloquist stood quietly in the engine-room of a great steamer and imitated the squeak of a rusty bearing. The old engineer found his oil-can and began to "grease up." He applied his lubricant to every sensitive point, but the creaking still kept on. His suspicions were aroused, and creeping stealthily behind the ventriloquist, he squirted about a half a pint of oil down his neck, with this quiet comment: "There, blame you! Let's see if you'll stop squeaking now."

But the real point of this essay has not yet appeared. Let me now press it into the consciences of my readers as gently but as firmly as I can. It is simply this—that a husband ought to respect his wife's sense of propriety equally with his own, and so ought the woman her husband's. Each of us has had training in a home where certain customs prevailed. It was natural and inevitable that they should seem to us to constitute the essential elements of good manners. But those customs differ and perhaps conflict. Now who is right? I, for one, shall not attempt to say. But I know this—that nothing but trouble will follow your efforts to resist each other's fixed ideas. We have our own

personal sensibilities of the eternal fitness of things, and we are bound to suffer when someone whom we live with every day persistently tramples upon them.

If that good wife of yours wants you never to sit down at the table in your shirt-sleeves, don't you do it, even if you are parboiled before you have finished your meal. If your husband is disturbed because you say "seen" for "saw" and "had went" for "had gone," correct your grammar at any cost.

Put yourselves in each other's places, and remember how it grates to have your own sense of propriety offended.

These are little things, but life is made up of "little things," and especially of little kindnesses and courtesies—those petty sacrifices out of which good manners are made.

"Manners are an art. Some are perfect, some commendable, some faulty, but there are none which are of no moment. How comes it that we have no precepts by which to teach them, or at least no rules whereby to judge them as we judge sculpture and music? A science of manners would be more important to the virtue of men than one would be likely to suppose," so thought Joubert one of the greatest of all critics of human life.

## XIX

## THE SACRIFICES OF PARENTS FOR CHILDREN.



HERE are many altars upon which we mortals offer costly sacrifices where the fires never die down and the incense never ceases to ascend.

But it is upon the altar of childhood that the most precious of them all are burned. For there is a divine instinct in the soul that impels it to lay all its treasures at the feet of the tiny god of the cradle. Nothing is too valuable and nothing too sacred to be immolated in the worship of this speechless divinity who rules our world without a crown or sceptre. Men and women who have lived almost utterly selfish lives are amazed to discover how easy and even how delightful it is to deny themselves the most coveted pleasures and luxuries for the sake of those exacting tyrants, toddling about the nursery or growing into manhood and womanhood.

We speak bitterly and contemptuously of

human selfishness, and there is much to provoke if not to justify our cynicism. But when one stops to think of the immeasurable and unstinted devotion of parents to children it is quite enough to inspire respect and even awe. How easy it would be to do less! In many cases it would undoubtedly be much *better* to do less for these little parasites. And yet the average father and mother continually castigate themselves because they cannot do more. They long and pray and struggle for greater power and wealth and culture and position in order that they may lay them upon this ever-smoking altar of childhood.

How beautiful and wonderful it is. Last night I happened to be seated at a concert by the father of one of the performers. He could not wait for a natural opportunity to inform me who he was, but burst into my meditations with the excited information that I should soon hear the wonderful playing of a young woman of whom he had the distinguished honor to be a parent. Presently she appeared, radiant with the consciousness of power, beautifully and almost gloriously dressed. I turned instinctively to examine the clothing of the father. It was threadbare and shiny. His hands were rough and horny. He spoke a broken German. He was a rude, uncultivated man. But when

that young girl stepped out upon the platform and drew her bow across the violin, his eyes filled with tears, his chin quivered, his bosom heaved.

He did not need to tell me the story of his life, nor of that of his "old frau," who probably could not afford to come to the concert, because of one last sacrifice for that pretty sash about the daughter's waist. I could read it all in the premature wrinkles and gray hairs, in the cheap clothing, in a thousand indescribable but painfully legible signs. And it was a moving sight. I scarcely heard the music, so profoundly was I stirred by the thought of all those innumerable and hourly sacrifices that these parents had made for their child. But my admiration was qualified by questions which I did not dare to ask. Was she grateful? Did she appreciate this devotion? Did she return it?

I do not write to disparage such sacrifices. They are sublime. It is a debt that we must pay to Nature. None of us are too good to lay our very selves upon that altar, to say nothing of our money and our tastes. It is an infamy to complain at the necessity of this self-immolation. It is the highest dignity and the holiest joy of our humanity. Do you feel that you are being consumed in a fire of suffering and sacrifice for your

offspring? Well, it was for this that you were born. You know beyond a peradventure, perhaps, that you are overworked and underfed and underdressed in order that this brood of noisy children may have the advantages that you never enjoyed. You know that you are deprived of what seem your natural rights. You know that you are shortening your life and that you are certain to die ten years before your time. Well, no matter. You are only obeying a fundamental law of Nature. You are doing nothing more than it is your duty to do, and if you do it in the right spirit you will enjoy a happiness deeper than the sea.

But at the same time you are running a terrible risk of killing your children with kindness. An irrational devotion to children is even more deadly than neglect. To pamper them is to ruin them, for it makes them helpless. People who are always being done for, can never acquire the power to do for others nor for themselves.

"Can any of you gentlemen tie a four-in-hand?" asked a man of forty-five years in the toilet-room of a sleeping-car.

"Can't you?" said I, knotting his cravat.

"Never did it in my life."

"Who does it for you?"

"I live in the South and the coons do."

That is history, but it is also tragedy. And there is a tragic story of a boy who had a pet squirrel. So overflowing was his love, that in order to express that affection in action, he cracked the shells of the nuts for his little pet. But in a few short weeks the squirrel's unused teeth grew out so long as to curl up like a shaving and make even chewing impossible.

Such helpless creatures are not all in squirrels' cages. The streets of our great cities are full of them—spoiled by the irrational affection of their parents.

In the first place, such sacrifices make children selfish. Not one person out of a hundred can be toadied to and made a little god of, without coming to feel that this sort of adoration is his right. It is an instinct to love to be waited on and petted. It stimulates our egotism. We become accustomed to attention and to service and resent its withdrawal. To grow exacting, inconsiderate, and tyrannical when made the daily centre of the family life is substantially inevitable. You have sacrificed to this god until he has become a monster.

In the second place, they make children ungrateful. That is a very pretty theory of yours, that the more you do for your children the more

they will love and bless you, but it does not stand the test of daily experience. The most loving, dutiful and grateful children are invariably the ones who have been obliged either by the circumstances of their lives or the good judgment of their parents to do the most for their fathers and mothers. Upon that assertion I will fearlessly stake my claim to respect for carefully observing the phenomena of family life. There is an ineradicable tendency in our human natures to despise the people who truckle to us. We instinctively love, honor and bless those who make us do our work and bear our proper share of the burdens of life.

Love your children; labor for them; sacrifice to them. But make them tie their own neckties and crack the shells of their nuts, or go without their meats.

## XX

## LETTING CHILDREN "GET THEIR OWN GAITS."

ONE of the most fruitful of all sources of domestic unhappiness is the stubborn determination of the parent to bend the child's nature to fit its preconceived theories of its duty and destiny. It requires an almost superhuman wisdom and self-control to acknowledge their right and capacity to do what they want to and be what they wish to, after we have moulded them like clay for a dozen or fifteen years. Nothing ever gives us such a shock of surprise as the discovery that our children know more than we do.

"No boy of nineteen is wise enough to decide his 'life question' for himself. I am his father, and it is my duty to decide for him," said a man to me not long ago.

I would as soon attempt to resist the course of a star in its natural orbit.

My recognition of personality is very humble.

## Letting Children Get their Own Gaits

There is always an individuality in each new life that appears among us, before which I bow in reverence. Each child has a natural "bent," and unless it is toward something positively evil, the true mission of the parent seems to me to be to discover and develop it.

There was a half-witted Scotch boy who felt that he had a call to the "meenistry," and presented himself to the Presbytery.

"Do you think you can preach?" they asked.

"No—I could not preach."

"Could you conduct a funeral?"

"No."

"Could you baptize a baby?"

"No."

"What could you do?"

"Well, if there was a meeting of the Presbytery, I could *object to all the motions.*"

Now, I grant you, that the bent of this Scotch boy ought to have been restrained; but allowing for such exceptions, I would like to set forth my view in the following parable:

The head jockey down on the Blue Lick horse ranch got it into his head that the beautiful two-year-old "Apple Jack" ought to make a trotter. There were those who disagreed with him, as for example, "old Uncle Eph," who had been

with "Apple Jack" from the very hour of his birth, nursed him, fed him, groomed him and petted him like one of his own little piccaninnies. He knew every point about him, good and bad (although it was almost as much as any man's life was worth to hint at any flaw in his presence). "Nevah make a trottah outen dat young crittah in de world," he would say with a snort, throwing his head high in the air. "Taint his nachul gait. I ain' sayin' what dat nachul gait is, case I ain' been ast; but tain' no trottin' gait, sho's you's bohn." But the jockey was a stubborn man. When an idea was driven into his thick head, it seemed to rust like an old nail, and nothing could draw it out. And so, day after day, week in and week out for months he hitched "Apple Jack" to a sulky and drove him round and round the track, trying to get him to trot. Sometimes he coaxed him and sometimes he whipped him; but neither method brought success. The spirited and often frantic creature seemed to do his best to please his driver; but in spite of himself he could not manage his pretty feet. Trot, they would not.

At last the head jockey got mad. He took "Apple Jack" out of the sulky, led him down to the pasture, opened the bars, hit the broken-



PARENTAL DEVOTION. (See page 111.)

hearted colt a slap with the headstall, and muttered with an oath: "Get out of this, you good-for-nothing puppy. Some fine day I will hitch you to a hay-rake and see if you know enough to do menial labor."

The poor thing hung his head, looked reproachfully after the retreating figure, and seemed to say, "I am not ashamed to be hitched to a hay-rake; but I haven't had a fair chance. There is something in me that hasn't come out yet. I don't want to complain, but I just wish you would let me try to find my own natural gait, and not be always yanking me around and hitting me with a whip."

Not long afterward, "old Uncle Eph" came stealthily down to the pasture, whistled softly, put a bridle on the head of "Apple Jack," who came nickering up to the bars, and led him back to the barn. He put him into the traces once more and drove him out upon the highway. "Now, sonny," said he, "I'se gwine ter give you de chance ob yo life. De jockey done gone ter town, and I wan' you ter make a record."

He laid the reins gently down on the sleek back, and the beautiful creature, with one wild, free plunge, "struck his gait." It was an easy "pace." He swung those dainty feet in a long sweep, just

clearing the surface of the smooth road and went spinning toward town at three-minute speed. It was five miles to the village, and just as they reached the outskirts they overtook the head jockey and swept past him like a whirlwind.

"He's struck he's gait," yelled "old Uncle Eph," through a cloud of dust, and the head jockey almost fell out of the buggy in astonishment.

Well, there have been a great many young fellows whom I have known to be yanked around and prevented from finding their gait. Some of them have been as gentle and submissive as "Apple Jack," and have gone through life trotting or loping when they ought to have "paced." And some of them have taken the bit in their teeth, kicked over the traces, and smashed things generally.

I have one such young fellow in mind, whose father has sat in the sulky behind him (sulkier than the sulky itself, sometimes), and just pulled him, and hauled him, and held his feet down and curbed every natural propensity of his spirit. He wants to "dock" him, "clip" his hair, and make a "high-stepper" of him, and he will never do it in the world. I just fairly ache to get hold of him as " old Uncle Eph" did of "Apple Jack,"

for I am absolutely certain in my own mind that he has a gait that would astonish the old man. It wouldn't be anything *fancy*, but he would get right down before the biggest load that you pile upon a lumber wagon and go off with it as Samson did with the gates of Gaza. I cannot say that I believe in giving boys their "head," but I do believe with all my heart in letting them "find their gait." I never could see why stubborn old jockeys should always know more than nature herself. I have a sort of notion that Nature puts one kind of gait into horses and boys as really as farmers put another kind into fences.

Let them "get their gait," and then try to help them make it perfect.

## XXI

## A GOOD WORD FOR THE "BAD" BOY.



HOSE bad boy? Almost everybody's.

One day a little gamin peeped into a street car door and cried out: "Mister, your wife wants to know if you mailed that letter?" Every man in the crowd is reported to have reached instinctively for the pocket of his coat.

The very mention of the "bad boy" gives every parent in the world a start like that. If he is not universal, he is at least common enough to be the one unsolvable problem of domestic life. The mantle of this year's crop is falling steadily on the next. Mothers are forever making the bewildering discovery that their darling sons are not angels, and no parent who is not hopelessly vain will dare to say: "My boy is not like others." For, while the fond and foolish boast is being made, the listeners are laughing in their sleeves or curling their lips for the people across the

street know more about your darling than you can possibly know yourself.

But some of them are so much worse than others that I shall sort out the very "baddest" boy of all and have a word to say in his behalf. "The worst of boys is better than the best of men," declares an old saw, and an honest observer is at once convinced of its wisdom, for the man's badness has always in it something of self-knowledge and self-approbation, while the boy's is unconscious and uncomprehended.

If there is any one object on this earth to whom my heart goes out in utter sympathy it is a boy who feels a thousand incomprehensible desires and passions boiling up from the depths of his soul and wondering why it is not right for him to do what he wants to do. We must put ourselves back in the little fellow's place and remember how ignorant and inexperienced we also were. This will keep us from the egotism and the injustice of thinking that in ourselves every mortal sin is venial, and that in our boys every venial sin is mortal.

If you have a bad boy, there are many things which you ought to try and recollect.

In the first place, that his badness is not diabolical, for it is not intentional. I do not mean

that it is not so sometimes, but that you must not infer that because you yourself could not do certain things without being intentionally bad, your boy cannot. If there was ever a *non sequitur* in the world, this is one. In most of the little rascals, badness is only misdirected goodness. What they actually do is a very different thing from what they start out to do. When I was keeping "bachelor's hall" in a little shack on the Columbia river I tried to make a pie. Having mixed the ingredients with the utmost care I put them in the oven. Imagine my astonishment on opening the door at discovering that my pie was an apple dumpling six inches thick. It is my firm faith that ninety-nine out of every hundred of the worst things that boys do were meant to be good pies and that their turning into bad dumplings was a greater astonishment to them than to you. How little they know about the ingredients they are mixing. The poor little chaps are playing with violent explosives, and it isn't strange if they get blown up now and then. It is bad for a boy to lie and steal and neglect his work. It is very bad. But it is not so bad as it would be in you. There is evil in it, and a whole lot of evil. But it isn't all evil; and if you want to help a boy you must not misjudge him.

In the second place, even if a boy is congenitally wrong, and has a base heredity, remember the tremendous power of environment. For one, I believe with a grim and increasing faith that the scientists have done the present generation of children an irreparable injury by exaggerating the fateful power of inherited traits. They spoke to overwilling ears. The discipline of childhood is a hard and too often unwelcome task. People are hungry for any justification of their neglect of these solemn obligations, and it is so easy to excuse our derelictions of duty on the ground of "heredity." There needs to be a trumpet sounded in this land to call people back to the old-time sense of parental responsibility.

The fathers and mothers of some of us did not excuse themselves from the solemn and even awful sense of the fact that our destinies were in their hands by pleading this demoralizing theory of "inherited tendencies." If we were wrong, it was their business to make us right. They regarded us as clay in the hands of potters, and they turned the wheel and applied the paddle and licked us into shape—mixed though the metaphor be.

That bad boy of yours must be put right, and God will hold you accountable for the task.

You can delude yourself only too easily with these scientific half-truths about the traits of his great-grandfather or granduncle cropping out in him, but you cannot fool the Judge. Worse boys than yours have been "brought to time" and "put right," and if you do not bring that boy of yours into line you will have to face the responsibility.

In the third place, this great task requires the consecration of the very highest talents you possess, and especially those of sympathy and insight. That little fellow must be studied as scientists study the profoundest problems and the most delicate organisms. He is a brand-new combination. There was never another exactly like him. He does not know himself, and so you must learn to know him. You must brood over him night and day, searching for the secret springs of action and for the master key of his being. Do not doubt for a single instant that there *is* a master key. There is certainly some central, pivotal principle or motive which you can discover if you will, and by means of that discovery enter the very sanctuary of his spirit. What a fascinating study! The science of the nature of birds and ants and bees and orchids and stars is simplicity itself compared with that

of a growing boy. To master it requires infinite patience and devotion. It will not do to scold and nag and cuff this little fellow, and then let him roam the streets while you go off to card parties or even to clubs. A boy is always first. I do not believe that the most solemn other responsibilities ever have precedence over the education and discipline of a boy. I do not believe that a man would have the right to acquire a seat on the supreme bench, or even the chair of the White House, at the expense of a boy. I know that a mother who will sacrifice a boy to the presidency of even the "federation of all the clubs on earth" is worthy to be reckoned among the world's supreme disgraces.

## XXII

## THE ENNUI OF CHILDHOOD.

IF it is terrible to be tired of life in middle age, by what name shall be describe the horror of this surfeit in childhood? And yet, who does not know that ennui has attacked our young men and women, and that it has begun to infuse its venom into the veins of our boys and girls! I have many little friends hardly out of pinafores and knickerbockers who have drained the cup of pleasure almost to the dregs. There is not a kind of toy which human ingenuity has devised that they have not played with for a few moments and then tossed aside in disgust. When you were a boy or a girl you had a top or a doll that gave you delight through season after season. But your children use up and throw away miniature steam engines, automobiles, pianolas and cooking stoves almost before the bill comes home from the store.

They have had Shetland ponies and dog carts from the dawn of consciousness and think no more

of them and care no more for them than you did about an old cat or a mud-turtle.

They have been to so many parties in clothes that cost more than your wedding gown and to so many theatres where every human passion has been violently delineated, that there are no longer any spectacles that can divert them.

At last, it has become impossible to give them anything more than a momentary happiness. Their sensations are incapable of being excited except by more and more powerful stimulants. They are gluttons and drunkards of pleasure and have become a burden to themselves and a torment to others.

Now, where does the responsibility for this condition of affairs lie? But one answer is possible. It is with the parents. The child nature does not change from age to age. The little people of this present generation are as capable of being "pleased with a rattle and tickled with a straw," as any other. You have but to take away the costly treasures that you have bestowed upon those spoiled darlings; put blue jeans on them and send them out into the country to the farm-house of some poor relation, to secure their almost instantaneous return to a "state of nature." In a month's time you may visit them in the absolute

certainty of finding that boy who was sick unto death of his bicycle, electric tram-car and tennis court—riding an unbroken colt, building a dam in a meadow brook, and playing "hare and hounds" with the zest of a new birth.

Yes, it is our own fault that our children are surfeited with life. It is we ourselves who have entailed upon them this curse of ennui. And all on account of an immoral and inexcusable sentimentality. It is, in fact, nothing but a hideous species of self-indulgence. We do not bestow these superfluities on our children because they really need them; nor even because they really want them. We do it because we get a morbid pleasure in seeing them abnormally happy.

The operations of two other influences intensify this evil. The first is that of social rivalry. Our neighbor's children have their luxuries and we cannot endure the thought of letting them surpass us.

The second is that of such great absorption in business and society that we do not thoughtfully consider our children's actual needs. Recall the last Christmas day and answer a few direct questions. When you went down town to buy presents for your brood of little boys and girls had you carefully decided what they ought to have to do

them good? Or did you wait until the last moment, grab a lot of money out of the drawer and go rushing around from one store to another spending it on any foolish gim-crack that attracted your attention just because you were in a hurry or had a backache?

Speaking for myself, I have done many things on the day before Christmas that I shall have hard work squaring myself for when I'm called upon to settle my final accounts.

No parent can righteously forget these three fundamental facts about children.

In the first place, playthings that save the imagination and the inventive power of the child trouble are almost certain to do it harm instead of good.

In the second place, all precocious pleasures encroach upon future happiness, for little people who enjoy at the age of ten what belongs to the age of twenty are spending their capital instead of living on their interest.

In the third place, over-gratified children become selfish, egotistical, imperative and offensive, for nobody loves a bald-headed and blasé infant.

It is really a terrible thing to over-indulge a child. The responsibility of surfeiting it with life

and filling its soul with ennui is a solemn one, indeed. How much better to deny them hurtful pleasure and so keep them young and simple. Hold some of their pleasures back for a future day. Leave them something to thirst for and to strive after.

A well-known English dean once had the misfortune to lose his umbrella under suspicious circumstances. And so, at the close of his morning sermon in the cathedral, he remarked in a significant manner that if the person who had it, would throw it over the garden fence at night, nothing further would be said.

On the following morning he not only found his own umbrella, but some thirty-seven others.

I wish I knew some equally effective way to persuade all the people who have filched the natural enjoyment of life from their children to make them all the restitution in their power.

It is horrible to think how many boys and girls are being cursed by wealth. We suffer mental tortures at stories of the deprivations of the children of the poor, but I wonder whether the angels do not see more to excite their pity in contemplating the surfeit of the children of the rich.

Of all the calamities that ever fell on the souls of men, disgust with life is the grand climacteric.

# The Ennui of Childhood

"I have seen the world and have discovered that ennui is our greatest enemy."

"Ennui shortens life and bereaves the day of its light."

"Ennui, perhaps, has made more gamblers than avarice, more drunkards than thirst, and more suicides than despair."

Think of this horrible affliction attacking a little child.

## XXIII

## DEMONSTRATIVENESS IN THE HOME.

INDIVIDUALS differ enormously in the capacity and the disposition for self-revelation. By a natural tendency, some conceal while others reveal their emotions and their thoughts.

But art, as well as nature, conspires to develop the habits of disclosing or hiding our true selves. People deliberately force themselves (and educate others) to use speech, gesture, and every other medium of communication to convey true or false impressions. The greatest of all diplomatists boasted that he could conceal his thoughts by means of seven different languages. One of the very hardest problems in the conduct of life (and of a household) is that of "demonstrativeness." To how great a degree shall we "wear our hearts upon our sleeves?"

I am for great *openness*. To me, utter transparency is the most beautiful of all human qualities. Nothing affects me so profoundly as to meet



PLEASURES OF CHILDHOOD. (See page 128.)

people whom I can see clear through. Do you think transparency is shallowness? I do not. Obscurity and opaqueness are not depth. Sheet iron is opaque, but it is not deep.

It is the greatest mystery about a soul that it may be both as deep as the sea, and yet as transparent as crystal.

I am also for great *demonstrativeness*. I abhor a human clam. Give me a soul that pours out its feelings like a singing bird and that flashes its emotions from every facet of its nature like the scintillations of a diamond. Such people are not content to keep their feelings under lock and key like money, nor even in a show-case like precious jewels, but scatter their lights abroad like stars.

In a famous toast, Senator Lamar described St. Patrick as a man who had "a blow for the bad, a smile for the glad, and a tear for the sad." What a companion! What a friend! The soul of him always bursting forth like light, like odor, and like music. That is what I call "demonstrativeness."

There are some people whom you have known for twenty years and do not know them yet.

The homes that I love best are those where the inmates give free play to their affections. Husbands and wives ought to be demonstrative toward each other; parents ought to be demonstrative

toward their children, and children toward their parents; brothers toward sisters, and sisters toward brothers. For, love is something that will not be taken for granted. "You ought to take it for granted that I love you," snarls some cold-blooded fish of a man when his weeping wife complains that he never utters a word of affection. But suppose a rose should say to the florist: "You ought to take it for granted that I am sweet without asking me to be all the time tiring myself out by pouring forth this costly fragrance." Suppose the candle should say to the housewife: "You ought to take for granted that I am bright without asking me to waste my tallow by burning all the night!" No, sir, this is impossible. Love must be manifested. It can be known only through expression. It is cruel and it is irrational to ask your family to believe that you love them when you do not show it.

Home life ought to be full of *kind deeds*, for they are the deepest and most reliable manifestations of love. Let the courtesies of life never be forgotten. Wait upon each other. Give up the easy chairs. Open the doors. Shut them softly. Sew on the buttons. Carry the burdens. Split the kindling wood. Bring in the water. Be helpful.

## Demonstrativeness in the Home

Home life ought to be full of *gentle and affectionate words and speeches.* If any member of the family has done something well, tell him so. Is the bread good? Acknowledge it. Call each other by your pet names. There may be some occasions when you ought to call your wife "Mrs." and others when it is best to speak every syllable of her first name, even if it's Marianna or Mehitable. But for everyday use, up stairs and down, in-doors and out, nothing goes quite so well as "Sweetheart." Butter your tongues. Let your words drop honey. Speak kind things to everybody, from the tottering old grandfather down to the scullery maid. They say that "money makes the mare go," but it is vastly more important to know that kind words make the home go.

> "'Tis a word that's quickly spoken
> Which—being restrained, a heart is broken!"

Home life ought to be full of *kisses and caresses.* And now methinks the air is full of groans and remonstrances. The cold, hard, practical, unromantic natures roar their dissent. "Kisses!" "Rubbish and nonsense! Of what value can they be as evidences of love?"

"Kisses are like grains of gold and silver found upon the ground: of no value in themselves, but

precious as showing that a mine is near," replies George Villers. It was of love's young dream that rare old Ben Jonson sang: "Or leave a kiss, but in the cup and I'll not ask for wine." But I want to tell some of the people whose homes are cold as open Polar seas and whose hearts are sad as autumn days, that if your broken-hearted husbands or wives would find a kiss within the cup, they would not ask for wine, nor diamonds either. One warm kiss, one fond embrace would do more to bring back the roses to those cheeks and the light to those eyes than the gold of Croesus or the jewels of Cleopatra.

Embraces and kisses at morning, noon and night are a panacea for a thousand human ills. You cannot overestimate their value. It is as foolish to question the significance of a kiss as of a spark of electricity. In these fond endearments, love manifests itself. Anger manifests itself in blows; amusement in smiles; sorrow in tears, and love in kisses. When people can be mad without striking, and tickled without laughing, and bereaved without weeping, they can love without embracing and kissing and not till then.

Let love's light shine. Seek every medium for its disclosure. Demonstrate its divine existence by every device that is known to man. How

many starved hearts are dying because defrauded of this heavenly manna! How like the dews of heaven a shower of kisses would fall upon the lips of some of the readers of this brief essay.

I had almost as soon see children brought up without the ten commandments as without embraces and kisses.

## XXIV

## BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS.

NO home is perfect that is not in harmony with the neighborhood life around it. I do not mean by harmony, that it is to take the prevailing color, direction and tone, whether right or wrong; but that it must stand in a truly sympathetic relation towards it. There must be friendliness and helpfulness in the hearts of the family toward the little world that encompasses its dwelling. We cannot be churlish and distant toward other people without their resenting our inhumanity and repaying it in kind. If we infringe upon their rights, they will trample upon ours. Beware of your children, your cow, or your dog and especially of your chickens. I have known an old Shanghai rooster and a couple of hens to produce a neighborhood war.

We must recognize the rights of our neighbors; but we must also cherish their interests and seek their welfare. Do you really wish your neighbors

well? Make them feel your kindly disposition. Do not be harsh with the children when they trample your lawn or shriek beneath your windows. Run in when any one is sick. Call on the strangers. Send them a batch of biscuits or a bouquet of flowers while they are settling. Do every kind office except lending. At least, refuse them as long as you *can*. But, above all, do not borrow. It was being borrowed from too much that drove a woman to the following paradoxical reply to a request for the loan of a wash-tub: "Lend you a tub? No. The hoops have burst; the staves have fallen down; the bottom is lost—and, besides, it is full of water."

A good deal more depends on establishing these friendly relationships than we dream, for the reaction that sets in from a neighborhood upon a home is as powerful as that of a galvanic battery.

Whatever other mistakes you make, do not be a "poor neighbor." Get your heart right toward everybody on every side of your home. Be sure and *wish them well*, and you'll be almost sure to treat them well and be well treated by them.

I was walking along one of the main streets of Indianapolis.

Suddenly a cheery "Hello" rang out upon the air, and an old gray horse was reined up by the

curbstone. A cheerful face peered out of the buggy, a few kind words were spoken, and we parted.

I had not taken a dozen steps when I heard a loud "Say."

Upon turning around, I saw that the horse was again at a standstill, and the genial face of the "Hoosier" was peering from under the back curtain of the buggy.

"What is it?" says I.

"I wish you well," says he.

I had met this gentleman for the first time on the previous day. He was not under the slightest obligation to me, and there was not the least prospect of our ever meeting again; but he stopped his old gray horse, on a cold day in winter, to tell me that my destiny was a matter of personal interest to him.

"I wish you well," says he.

Long after he had dropped the curtain and vanished from my view, I stood looking after him.

Only a moment before I had been pressed down by an unusual burden, for I was passing through one of those dark spots that we all find upon the journey of life.

But somehow, after the kind old Hoosier had spoken, the burden rolled from my shoulders.

"He wishes me well," I kept saying to myself.

I had just been muttering all the hard things that had ever been said about the selfishness of mankind.

One of those infernal distiches that stick to the memory like burrs and that poison the heart like arsenic, had been ringing through my head as monotonously as an old cow-bell.

"As I was walking by myself, myself said to me:
Beware of thyself; take care of thyself; for nobody cares for thee."

Suddenly, like the song of the first robin in spring, I heard the sweet refrain, "I wish you well, I wish you well," and this from the lips of a stranger.

I am not ashamed to tell you that tears of gratitude filled my eyes, and that I cannot recall the words up here in my cosy study without a warm feeling around my heart.

He gave me no money, he did not offer me any substantial assistance in my pressing emergency, but he "wished me well."

I do not know what mysterious power was in that wish, but it seemed to carry me over a rough spot and it was just at that time that the tide turned in my life.

# Being Good Neighbors

Perhaps it is literally true, what Elizabeth Barrett Browning said, that "every wish is a prayer —with God."

At any rate, my experience gave the lie to that sneer of the Roman poet Plautus, "'He wishes well' is a worthless word unless a deed go with it."

What an atmosphere to fly in, are good wishes. How easily the tired wings are sustained by them. How cheerily the sailor-boy puts out to sea when his sweetheart stands on the wharf to "wish him well." How bravely the regiment goes into the fight when mothers and sisters and wives stand on the brow of the hill and "wish it well."

Life is a hard struggle for most of us, and the least we can do is to "wish each other well."

Whoever you are, down there in the arena, covered with dust, and half dead with the struggle, "I wish you well."

Perhaps I shall never have a chance to serve you, but "I wish you well."

However disagreeable our neighbors may be, we at least can wish them well, which will be to treat them well, for wishes are the fathers of thoughts and deeds.

## XXV

## A BOUQUET OF POISON WEEDS IN THE HOME GARDEN.



HERE are a great many things that doctors and ministers learn about home life through very exceptional opportunities.

It has been dubiously affirmed that a disciple of Mrs. Eddy once found a little boy crying by the roadside and asked him what the matter was. With much blubbering and moaning he managed to tell her that he had eaten some green apples and was suffering pain.

"But, my little man, you are not really suffering. You only think so," said this metaphysical "Good Samaritan."

"Excuse me for contradicting you; but I've got *inside* information," the boy replied.

Upon some of the sources of domestic infelicity, we too have "inside information." Of course, I do not mean to say that no one but ourselves knows anything at all about the vices which I

have called "a bouquet of poison weeds from the home garden;" but only that we know them quite as exhaustively as anyone else, and perhaps a little more so.

The first of these weeds is "melancholy." There is absolutely no other mental state of mind so bitter-sweet as melancholy. It is the very joy of this misery that makes it dangerous—for we are never so happy as when we are sad. To sit down and deliberately chew the cud of discouragement is to most people a delicious luxury. But it is also a demoniac and deadly one, for it throws a pall of gloom over the life of every other person in the household, and finally reduces the one who feels it to pessimism and despair. Do not flatter yourself that you are doing no harm simply because you do not break out into open laments. The very expression of your countenance paralyzes hope and joy.

The second of these weeds is "irritability." Perhaps there are some cases in which this wretched vice is purely physical. Sickness and even weariness put the nervous system out of gear.

It is said that there are industries in which the accidents are twice as numerous in the last hour of the day as in the one immediately after dinner. There are such hours in the home, when we are

all unstrung and off our guard—when the slamming of a door or scratching of a pin will make us jump like the explosion of a cannon. But genuine "irritability" (the real thing) is a moral disorder and lies within the province of the will. Did I say "moral" disorder? I meant *immoral*. There is only one phrase in the English language that adequately describes it, and that phrase is "pure cussedness." Blaming it on one's ancestors or one's environment will not do. The disorder is a vice and one of the worst in the whole calendar. I believe in my heart that there are multitudes of cases where irritability has produced as bad results in domestic life as drunkenness.

The third of these weeds is "fault-finding." There is a subtle mystery about complaining. The people who do it most, do not seem to know that they do it at all. They call their complaints narrations of facts. (I wonder if a mourning dove imagines that its plaintive note is pitched in the same key as the cheerful song of a robin.) When a man comes home at night, tired and hungry, longing for gay laughter and pleasant conversation, it is worse than any nightmare to hear a woman open the faucet and turn on her customary stream of complaints. How horribly they dribble into his ear. "The cook has been impudent, and

the baby has been cross, and the neighbor's children have made a noise, and the butcher has given her tough meat, and Oh, dear, and Oh, dear, and Oh, dear. Nobody in the world has ever had such troubles.

At first her husband tries to soothe her by declaring that such little things amount to nothing, and then she flares up and tells him that he has no appreciations of the hardships of a woman's lot. If he loses his temper and tells her that he cannot endure her whining—she thinks he is a brute, and goes off to bury her face in a bed pillow. But do not imagine that this vice is of the female sex alone. There are big men who whimper like sick puppies. I often think of the comment made by Mr. James on the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzche: "They remind one half the time of the sick shriekings of two dying rats, lacking the purgatorial note which religious sadness gives forth."

It would be a thousand times more agreeable to live with Niagara Falls roaring in one's ears, or to listen to the perpetual bellowing of thunder, than to the ceaseless wails of an habitual complainer.

Did you ever think that the noblest quality of the human soul is utterly lacking in complaint—

the quality of dignity? Complaining is a running sore. No complainer was ever admired and none was ever loved, except under protest. A distinguished critic has recently asserted that "great" music never complains. Neither do great men or women.

If you do not know the difference between a mere narration of the events of daily life (to which all people love to listen) and "complaint," then let a friend advise you to stop all other business and master the distinction. Complaining is not like snoring (the music of oblivion). The snorer can never learn how offensive is the quality of his midnight symphony, for the moment he awakens to listen, he ceases to sing. But the note of complaint can be distinguished by attention. You can be taught to hate it in yourself as badly as in another.

The fourth of these weeds is "nagging," the grand climacteric of all the vices of domestic life. Nagging is the sting of the bee complaint. Perhaps you would be interested to know that the word nag means to gnaw. (Gnaggan is the Anglo-Saxon form.) I suppose it was suggested by the sound of a dog's teeth on a bone—gnaggan, gnaggan, gnaggan. And what a horrible, persistent, crunching noise it is. If you have a dear

friend whom you want to turn into a hostile enemy, just begin to nag him. Find some little trivial fault and chew away at it.

I suppose there ought to be a note of sympathy and even tenderness in this criticism of a vice that is so often provoked in mothers by the tantalizations of childhood. "The faults of the child are persistent; and so must the corrections be," the poor, tormented woman says in self-defence. Persistent? So, indeed, they are. That's what turns women into naggers, I know. And it is a terrible provocation. But it won't do. The child will only stand it until it is able to resent it—and then follows the catastrophe.

Don't nag. Don't nag the children. Don't nag the cook. Don't nag the grocer's boy. Don't nag the night watchman; but, above all, do not nag your husband.

I wonder if this essay has seemed to reflect too severely upon the ladies? If I have called them hard names, I humbly beg their pardon, in this story which, I cannot but hope, will seem a compliment.

Joseph Choate was at a reception in London, when a bumptious Englishman mistook him for a butler or valet.

"Call me a cab," he said, in a pompous voice.



HOPE AND EXPECTATION. (See page 192.)

"You're a cab, sir," replied Mr. Choate, in his most polite manner.

This put the Englishman into a frenzy.

"You insult me," he fairly roared.

"Excuse me, sir. Then I will call you a *handsome* cab," the brilliant Minister replied.

## LXXVI

## YOUR HOME WILL BE WHAT YOU MAKE IT.



ATERS never rise above their levels, nor homes above the ideals of their founders. In every home there is a potential paradise, just as in every block of marble there is a potential angel. No matter how humble it is, do not belittle its possibilities. Regard it as being capable of becoming a veritable heaven on earth. Do not despise an acorn, for it may become an oak; nor a cabin, for it may become the habitation of saints, the residence of heroes, the shrine of happiness, and the temple of peace.

A little skiff lay floating peacefully upon the quiet waters of the St. Lawrence River. On the oarsman's seat, Francois, a weather-beaten, weather-wise, and weather-fearless Canadian, watched and waited to see me get a bite. Luck seemed against us, and Francois had determined to pull up the anchor and try another place, when

my rod gave a spasmodic jerk, and I took a few turns on my reel. There was no response at the other end, and I sank back reluctantly into my seat, exclaiming petulantly: "It is only a perch!"

"Play it for a bass," said Francois, laconically, and let the anchor drop back into the water.

He had hardly done so before the line tightened with a jerk, and I jumped to my feet shouting: "It's a maskalonge!"

Then came another sag, and I sat down again, muttering miserably: "Pshaw! It was nothing but a pumpkin seed."

"You ought to have played it for a bass," said Francois, shaking his head disapprovingly.

A few moments elapsed, then came another strike, and my reel began to sing.

"It acts like a pickerel, but it may be a bass. Play it for one," whispered Francois, reaching for his landing net.

"That's no bass! It's more like a sucker," I replied, dragging my catch carelessly to the surface.

"Play everything for a bass!" cried the guide, imperatively.

The captive was watching for that very loosening of his line, and, big black bass that he was,

gave one mad leap into the air, flung the hook out of his mouth, and vanished.

"Didn't I tell you to play everything for a bass?" screamed Francois, as I collapsed into my easy chair, and almost cursed my negligence.

"Play everything for a bass!" That is not a bad motto. When the opportunity came to the young Napoleon to turn his guns on the Paris mob, he took no chances of its being a perch, a pickerel, or a log, but played it for a bass. It was the same with Gustavus Adolphus, Charlemagne, and Caesar. It is the same with all successful men. They have never lost or scorned an opportunity. When they looked down into the sea of life, its contents were as invisible to them as to anybody else. Their success has not turned so much upon hindsight, or foresight, or insight as upon their clear perception that out of the most insignificant beginnings grow the mightiest events. They treat the nibble of a minnow with as much respect as they do the gobble of a whale.

I have a great deal to do with young men and young women just beginning life, and they do not differ in any other respect so much as in the importance they attach to little things. I have known some who would post a letter or run upon the most trifling errand with as much seriousness and devo-

tion to duty as if settling the fate of a nation. They play every minnow for a bass, while their companions play every bass for a minnow.

Multitudes of men treat existence itself as if it were of little consequence. They do not seem to realize that everything depends upon how they take it, or, as Francois says, how they "play it." I do not mean that the real facts of life or the real truths of life, or the real laws of life can be altered by our treatment of them, any more than you can turn a minnow into a bass by the way you handle your rod. But practically everything in life depends upon its treatment. (Take the question: "Is life worth living?") Any man's life is worth living if he lives it well. If he treats it as if it were nothing, it will be nothing. If he treats it as if it were everything, it will be everything. I have seen multitudes who played it for a perch, and always found it what they played for—no matter how rich in possibilities and in opportunities. I have seen some who took it in its impoverished beginning, and by a sublime confidence and a noble art, made it opulent with beauty and power.

(Take the deeper question, "Is our life eternal?") I do not mean that, if existence after death were a physical impossibility, our faith in that existence

or our effort to attain it can change the fact. Although I ought to say that even of this I may not be quite sure, for, believing as I do in the ceaseless evolution of life, there may be a point where, just as the effort of some noblest creature broke the bonds of brutehood and emancipated the imprisoned soul into its true humanity, so there may be a point where the determined faith of some heroic spirit in the possibility of survival after death may inaugurate a new life in a new realm of existence.

At any rate, standing here upon the shores of eternity and in the shadows of this earthly life, there is no man who may not make his present as noble as if it were immortal, whether it is or not. He has only to treat it as if he believed it were. This was the spirit that animated the Divine Master. He played his life for everything that was in it. He treated it every day and every hour and every moment as if it were divine. He knew himself to be the Son of God. Nothing was trivial to Him. No opportunity was insignificant. No state of life was mean or poor. Not for an instant could He be compelled to treat Himself or His fellow-men in any other way than as if they were all the children of a common Heavenly Father, and were all destined to an immortality of bliss or woe. No

man can doubt that there were many places in that life where, if He had taken it lightly or lost His faith in its sublimity, it would have sunk to the level of the lives around Him. It was His sublime faith, courage, constancy and conviction that were the essence of His humanity and the evidence of His divinity.

Joseph Addison once said: "We make provision for this life as if it were never to have an end, and for the other life as if it were never to have a beginning." This is the trouble with our lives. "Life is a mission. Every other definition of life is false and leads all who accept it astray. Religion, science, philosophy, though at variance on many points, all agree in this, that every existence is an aim." Do you doubt that this faith of Mazzini's made him the man he was? Was it not because he played life for all there was in it that he found it so noble and so good?

"I am the tadpole of an archangel," said Victor Hugo. And I affirm that it was treating his life from that point of view that lifted him to such an exalted plane.

I have wandered, but the path leads back to the goal. Play your home for a heaven, and a heaven it will be.

## XXVII

## ABILITY OF PARENTS TO SEE A JOKE.



HERE are many good "people" who are not good "parents." The qualities which make a man a first-class general or banker or statesman or merchant do not necessarily make a first-class father; nor do those which make a woman a brilliant social leader or club president or prize winner at whist parties, necessarily make a model mother.

In order to name all the qualities that go to make good parents, one would have to furnish a complete catalogue of human virtues, but there are a few that are essential.

And for the first I select "a profound sense of personal responsibility." But some parents seem to regard themselves as merely links in the chain of life, to draw the next generation after them with as much indifference as the links of a pump chain feel in drawing one another over the wheel. If the only influence in the evolution of a child's life

were heredity, this might do. But environment is, after all, the main, shaping power of character, and the true parent feels that every day of a child's life is a judgment day for him. He appreciates the perils of shipwreck. He measures the tragedy of moral ruin. He holds himself accountable to God for the character and destiny of this being he has summoned into life.

For the second I select "a beautiful blending of sternness with gentleness." It will not do for the father to be all one and the mother all the other. Each must be both. But how difficult it is to keep the soul in this fine equilibrium, to be as hard as steel and immovable as granite when a child needs to be curbed or chastened, and to be as fluid as water and as caressing as air in all those moments when it needs sympathy and tenderness. If you are not the first, the child will trample you under its feet, and if you are not the second, it will consider you an iceberg.

In the third place (be prepared for a surprise) I name "a keen sense of humor." So great is the importance of this grace in dealing with child life and so little recognition has it had that I may seem to exaggerate and throw it out of all proportion. But I had almost said: People who cannot see a joke have no business being parents. Child-

hood is certain to be full of absurdities. In adjusting themselves to the existing conventionalities of life (so many of which are irrational) the little people will make ludicrous blunders by an unavoidable necessity. Nine-tenths of the things they do in contradiction to the existing customs are quite as rational as the customs themselves, and are done because they cannot see any reason in many things being as they are (and no more can I).

A teacher became exasperated with a little fellow who always said, "I have went home," and made him stay after school until he had written the correct phrase, "I have gone home" five hundred times. But at the end of the long columns he added, "Dear teacher, I have got through and went home."

A little girl was writing a composition on "The Rabbit," and found herself in the predicament of the poet Schiller, who said of himself: "I have been for years trying to describe a hero without ever having seen one." This being the case with the little girl, she asked the teacher "if the rabbit had a tail?" "A small one—none to speak of," she replied. Whereupon the little girl affirmed in writing: "The rabbit has a small tail, but you must not speak of it."

## Ability of Parents to See a Joke

Now, what is the parent to do who hasn't a keen sense of the humor in the thousand and one situations into which the ignorance of childhood crowds it, and the quaint remarks in which it describes its impressions of life?

A stranger was calling in a home that was full of noisy boys. A half-dozen of them were rolling and tumbling on the dining-room floor, shouting and pounding each other until the guest became alarmed, and asked the father why he did not interfere. The good man had not even heard them, but, looking over his shoulder at the riotous mob, he said, with the utmost tranquillity, "Let the lambs play."

It is the ability to distinguish the *lamb-like* from the *wolf-like* qualities in the child, that makes the wise parent. And this true perception is rooted in the sense of humor. The sublime and the ridiculous, the grave and the gay lie so close together as to be distinguishable only by a trained sense of their true relations. "Humor is the invisible tear in the visible smile." "Humor is of a genial quality and closely allied to pity."

Ah! There you come upon the deep and subtle beauty of a sense of humor in the parent! It is the feeling of pity that lies back of the emotion of fun. All right-minded parents realize the pathetic

element in the ignorance and inexperience of the child. They laugh, but they also weep (secretly) at the piteous situations in which the little stranger finds itself among all the artificial conventions of our stiff and formal social system. There is something terrible about pouring the fluid nature of a little child into this rigid mold and expecting it to take the unnatural shapes without blunders and protests.

Many tragic sights that I have seen in homes where such formalism exists and where childhood is judged by parents who have no sense of humor, make me feel a profound relief when I hear a hearty laugh from the lips of a father or mother. For all little newborn souls need laughter, as flowers need sunlight and rain.

Let us laugh with them and laugh at them. It has been sententiously observed "that Rome died laughing," for "the Romans were shouting and applauding in the theatres when the Vandals were bursting open the gates." If people had more children and a finer appreciation of the unconscious humor in their thoughts and words, they would not need to go so often to circuses and theatres for hollow and empty laughter. The laughter provoked by childhood is as the music made by the rain upon the roof or the wind among the tree tops.

## Ability of Parents to See a Joke

"Stupid people who do not know how to laugh are always pompous and self-conceited."

"One good, hearty laugh is a bombshell exploding in the right place, while spleen and discontent are a gun that kicks over the man who shoots it off."

"A home without laughter is a flower without perfume, a bell without sound, a lamp without light."

"A keen sense of humor is as necessary in a parent as a keen sense of justice in a judge."

## XXVIII

## "LITTLE LIBERTIES" BETWEEN SEXES.

IT seems unreasonable in Nature to make such a fuss over what people call "little liberties," but she is relentless in her opposition to familiarities between the sexes. The doctor and the minister resent the necessity of having to stop kissing the little girls they have ushered into the world or baptized into the Kingdom, just because "they have put on long dresses." The young men and maidens cannot see why it is not as proper for them to kiss each other when they come back from college as when they used to play "pillow and keys" at a Saturday afternoon party, in pinafores and knickerbockers. Old sweethearts and friends attempt to maintain the free intercourse they enjoyed before marriage, even when they meet each other in their new-made homes.

Nevertheless, it will not do! Nature is against it tooth and nail, hoof and claw! She draws a

sharp line and says: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." We may protest and argue and denounce as we will—her fiat has gone forth.

How many homes have been wrecked by this rock of "little liberties"—the stolen kiss and the furtive embrace—on the ground of old or intimate friendship!

Whose heart has not resented this apparent prudery in our great mother, Nature! There are emotions of friendship that are inexpressible through any other media but an embrace or a kiss. There are also feelings of sympathy or pity that are capable of absolutely no other manifestations. Why then should we be forbidden to reveal them in this way?

No matter! Nature will have none of it! She has issued her manifesto. Kissing games must be confined to the tiniest children, if permissible at all. The dance must be eliminated, or safeguarded with the strictest regulations. All familiarities among people of opposite sexes must be resolutely abandoned and denounced.

Such is the verdict of human experience, of history made piteous with futile efforts to evade this fundamental law. Do not blame the religious and serious-minded people for insisting on this principle. They did not make the law. They

only announce and defend it. Nature alone is responsible, and she cannot be altered. Sex is what it is. Nothing is more elemental and ineradicable than its passions.

All men understand this peril, and when any one of them attempts to deny his comprehension of it he is insincere; although some of them may be honest in their overestimation of their power to control their impulses. Many women are fatuously ignorant or indifferent about it, and permit men to override an instinctive and natural antipathy to those too free relationships of a dissolute or careless society.

I plead for a loftier ideal of this relationship between the sexes. Every husband and wife is able to realize when a too great freedom is growing up between them and their intimates. Let it be instantly repressed. No one can tell where it will end.

But, while the other essays of this series have been mainly directed to husbands and wives, this one (which I would gladly write in fire instead of ink) is penned particularly with reference to the sons and daughters of these husbands and wives. If you parents have not done your duty in warning them about this matter, let a stranger do it for you.



THE MOTHER'S COMPANIONSHIP. (See page 198.)

## "Little Liberties" between Sexes

I think that most young men are sufficiently intelligent about this vice of "familiarities." If they take these "liberties" with young women, they do it with a full sense of their significance and danger. They may not intend any harm; but with a reckless confidence in their own will power, they run a risk that is inexcusable.

It is, therefore, to the young women that I make my appeal. You have an instinct that warns you against these "little liberties," and I beg you to obey it. Of course, there are young men who will call you a prude because you will not permit them to kiss you. But there is only one thing to do, and that is to bow before this instinct of your soul.

You crave the society of men, and you observe that the girls who are free with their kisses have men swarming around them like bees, while others who carry themselves with a womanly dignity are neglected and even ignored. This is hard, of course; but so are many other things. It is hard to wear calico when others wear silk. It is hard to work while others play. It is hard to close up your typewriter and go home to wash dishes and darn stockings, while others are hurrying gayly off to theatres or balls. All denial of self is hard. But it is right and God requires it.

Let me say two things to comfort and strengthen

you. In the first place, you are avoiding a great risk. Nothing is more certain than this—that every woman's downfall began with a "little liberty." Whatever the other steps may have been, the kiss was always the first one. The tragedy would never have happened but for that apparently innocent familiarity. That this risk is real and appalling, that it is greater than those of the first sip of the wine cup or throw of the dice, goes without saying. If the ruin of a life, if the utter perversion of a nature, if the final destruction of a character is horrible, you will at least act very wisely in not taking that reckless chance out of which it is so frightfully liable to issue.

In the second place, if you lose the interest and admiration of the flippant young fellows who are "going the pace that kills," you will gain the respect, and perhaps ultimately the love of some man whose ideals of womanhood entitle him to your confidence. Down deep in his heart every man bows low before a woman who holds her body sacred and who keeps her kisses and embraces for the man who offers her his hand and heart in marriage. Such men are not all dead yet. Wait until the right one comes. Better spinsterhood and a long life of toil than wedlock with a rake.

## XXIX

## TAMING A SHREW.



HERE is only one *possible* discovery, more terrible than a man's finding that the girl he married for her quiet gentleness is in reality a termagant! Yes, "it is really better to dwell in a desert land than with a contentious and fretful woman."

What is a man to do who finds out that his wife is a vixen? The ducking stool is out of fashion, and the jail yawns for a wife-beater. Is the case a hopeless one, and must he settle down to let that tongue wag on forever? It is a serious question, and because there are so many men whose lives are a torture on account of their fretful, complaining, scolding wives, it is out of place to joke.

There is a congenital tendency in some women to fret. God help them! They are as much to be pitied as blamed. In dealing with them the first experiment should be made with *silence*. It is not too much to say that the very existence of any

home is imperiled by the presence of a shrew, for the disposition to fume and scold is certain to increase with the passing years and the growing burdens of life. And no matter how patient a man may be, continual dropping wears away a stone. The quietest and most placid temper is liable to explode under the incessant strain of a vixen's fault-finding, and as "back-talk" is sure to provoke a quarrel, the husband of a shrew must learn to hold his peace.

It is not enough, however, simply to be still, for a woman who is the victim of this loathsome infirmity will talk as long as anyone will listen. But there is a psychological law in which there lies some hope. *She will not talk to herself.* It is among the bare possibilities of life that if she sees her husband clap on his hat every time she opens her batteries she may learn to keep still for fear of being left alone.

This, however, is but a slender hope. The disease is too deeply seated for superficial treatment, and requires heroic measures. Nothing but the exercise of masculine authority backed by the highest kind of moral power, will work a lasting cure, and it is because husbands hesitate to resort to this extreme measure that so many homes are wrecked by shrews.

# Taming a Shrew

Most men are utterly dispirited by a shrew's ceaseless outcry against life. A few experiments convince them of the incalculable force of this unhappy disposition, and they give it up as a bad job and fly to the saloon for consolation. Still other men are too courteous to oppose and struggle with a woman. There is in every true gentleman an instinctive deference for her sex and tolerance for her little weaknesses. Nothing is more distasteful to him than the assertion of his superior strength and will. The moment people lose self-control they resort to violence. There is but a step between resistance and wife-beating. The instinctive fear that a blow will be the consequence of a brawl has kept many a man quiet and patient until he found rest in the grave. For all men who do not possess the highest type of moral power and the most perfect self-control, there is no safe way but silence and non-resistance.

There are, however, men who possess qualifications for delivering women from the influences of this devil of fretfulness and fault-finding, and it is their duty to exercise their powers, not only for their own sakes, but for their wives. For the finer natures of such women are as sure to go to pieces under the evil influence of this pernicious habit as are those of their husbands.

What must a man do, then? Resist it! Stand firm and flat-footed against it! Tell his wife he will not have it! Warn her that she will ruin her own soul and his, and perhaps break up the home. This is not a matter to be minced. It is not a vice to be excused or condoned, being every bit as vicious as drunkenness. A common "scold" is not a whit more respectable than an inebriate. Termagants do not reel and fall down in a stupor. They do not smash furniture and pawn their jewelry for whiskey. But they do fill the cups of their husbands and their children with bitterness. They quench all domestic joy. They throw a continual shadow over the household. And the shrew ought to know it. There is no real obligation on a gentleman to permit his life and his home to be ruined from a sense of chivalry. His wife is a woman, but she is also a moral agent and accountable for her conduct.

What such women need is to be brought face to face with the moral depravity of shrewishness. Poor things! They are often sick and nervous. Those natures are as delicately tuned as Apollo's lyre. The little discords of daily life produce agony. Trifles are exaggerated into enormities. It's hard, and we lay our pity at their feet. But still, they, too, are endowed with personal respon-

sibility and with a free will. They have no right to be home-wreckers and heart-breakers, even if they are women. They have consciences—let their husbands appeal to that sublime tribunal. Let such husbands be as calm and as just, but as stern and exacting as God himself.

Many a woman who is now in some lunatic asylum because she was permitted to work herself into a frenzy over the trifles of housekeeping, might still be sane and happy if her husband had possessed the moral power and had exercised his authority to hold her back from that most inexcusable of all suicides—the destruction of a soul by fretfulness.

## XXX

## HUMANIZING THE BEAST.

IN multitudes of men the animal nature predominates. During courtship the beast qualities are kept under leash; but only to capture their prey, which, when at last it lies quietly under their paws, they proceed to devour.

The discovery of these brute propensities is a hideous blow to the soul of a sensitive and spiritually-minded woman. If there are any horrors greater than those of the inquisition, they are those of a honeymoon in which such discoveries are made, and if there is any problem more terrible than the humanizing of the male beast, it is probably incapable of solution. Those women who have found the answer are "they who have come up out of great tribulation," for, to be able to convert a man from that view of marriage and of womanhood which such brutes hold—to that spiritual conception which is the true ideal—is a victory worthy of an angel's prowess.

Of the more delicate aspects of this problem it is forbidden us to speak; but concerning a wife's ability to cope with the animal element of pure selfishness in the nature of her husband, a few frank observations may be made.

Undoubtedly the time to make a stand against it, is at its very first disclosure; but most women are so stunned by this unexpected manifestation that they cannot believe the testimony of their senses. By waiting to see if they are not mistaken and by concealing their horror and contempt, they lose the golden opportunity. But the longer they postpone the fight the harder the battle will be, when at last, it has to be set in array.

Before beginning the fight, however, let a wife be sure that what has shocked her is in reality *brute* nature and not mere *man* nature. After all, there is an enormous difference between the male and female. Remember, Oh! weeping and wounded wife, that you have married a *man* and not a *school-girl*. His thoughts, his feelings, his needs are what they are—and not what you have idly dreamed them. (In every man there is much that will jar upon a woman's nerves; but which is not bad—being only masculine and not malevolent.) Perhaps you are squeamish. Possibly your sensibilities are morbid.

But if this man whom you have married has in him the real animal nature, throw down the gauntlet and fight it out. If he believes that he ought to be waited on and catered to and cringed before and molly coddled; if he regards you as a mere menial; if he wants his own way always and everywhere, the probabilities are that nothing will ever affect him so profoundly as the immediate discovery that there is something in the soul of a woman that will not degrade itself to the level of the beast.

I am a believer in the natural awe of man's soul in the presence of a woman. I think that until she shows herself a chattel, he is prepared to bow before her as a divinity. Although he may not be conscious of this, and may really regard her as his inferior, I still am sure that if she suddenly unveils the majesty of her womanhood he will prostrate himself in the dust. But if he is permitted to abuse her for a little while, she will possess no more of this supernal beauty and authority in his eyes than an idol which a worshipper has once dared to shatter. And so I say, that a woman's rights can never be so safely asserted, nor her divinity so surely proclaimed, as in those first moments when her husband dares to question it.

## Humanizing the Beast

At any rate, the humanizing of the beast in the man is a matter of the disclosure of a divinity in the woman. She must make it manifest that there is something too sacred in her soul to permit this selfishness to live in her presence.

But she cannot do this by denunciation. Loud-mouthed fulminations against his brutality will only degrade her in her husband's eyes, for the true divinity neither strives nor cries aloud, nor frets.

And she cannot do it by argument, for, as the virtue of Caesar's wife must be above suspicion, so must her divinity be above discussion. Female prerogatives that admit debate are already forfeited. Let her imitate the Supreme Being who never deigns to answer the arguments of His detractors.

Perhaps the art of taming the tiger in a man is incommunicable, but still it is an art, whether communicable or not. And at any rate, it is clear that the first prerequisite is *a noble soul.* There must be a *real* divinity, pure, unselfish, majestic.

In the second place, there must be a *masterful will,* exerting itself quietly, steadily, irresistibly, from day to day and year to year.

And in the third place, it must be as gentle as it is powerful, acting like the sunlight and the dew.

## Humanizing the Beast

There must be no quarrelling in the cage. The tiger will always win in an open fight. Victory must be secured with the eye and not with claw and fang. Superiority must be manifested by the majesty of the mien and not by some poison in the sting.

But it is quite as fatal a mistake to suppose that this brute nature in a man can be cured by petting and nursing. It is not truculence and servility; but superiority and grandeur that conquer and convert. I do not say pride and haughtiness; but "superiority and grandeur." It is they alone that can make the man

> "Arise and fly
> The reeling faun, the sensual feast:
> Move upward, working out the beast
> And let the ape and tiger die!"

Perhaps few women possess these gifts on a grand scale. At any rate, there are multitudes of homes where women are hopelessly chained to men whose animal instincts they have never succeeded in taming. What message has human experience for them? Be patient! Be quiet! Be silent, and learn not to care! Live your own life! Treat your husband's selfishness as if it were a natural force like frost or fire or rust or mildew. Busy yourself with household cares and charities.

Above all, live in your children and confide your sorrows to your God.

Does this strike dismay to your souls? Do you ask whether there is no other relief? I answer—none. Do you ask whether you can be happy? I answer—that depends upon yourself.

If you are low-spirited, little-minded, feeble-hearted you cannot.

If you are high-souled and lion-hearted you can.

Women of exalted natures have been happy with no husbands at all; with dead husbands; and even with bad husbands.

Truly heroic souls are always greater than anything that can happen to them.

## XXXI

## OUTSIDERS IN THE HOME.

AT least two families out of every three are forced by the exigencies of life to make a home for some poor or dependent relative. This situation presents one of the greatest problems of domestic life, and it is of the utmost importance to know the moral laws that underlie it.

In the first place, the unity of the family must be preserved. There is a certain divine fraternity between parents and children that cannot be shared by even the most intimate friend. That sacred circle of sympathy is a wall of fire and cannot be penetrated by anyone who has not the passport of that blood relationship. This seems a great hardship to the outsider, but it is inevitable. The circumference cannot be the centre in any kind of circle. It is useless and it is presumptuous for the grandfather or the grandmother, the brother or the sister, the father or the mother, to hope to share that inner intimacy.

In the second place, the primary heads of the household must be maintained. They may be very inexperienced and act with the poorest kind of judgment, but they must not be interfered with. They have a right and duty to live their own lives, which no one else can live for them, and must give their home a character derived from their own, even though it be a poor and even base one.

Now it is forgetfulness of these two immutable facts by outsiders in the household that produces most of the trouble arising from this complex relationship. Of course, there are selfish and brutal men and women who have homes of their own, and who would make the position of a dependent intolerable under any circumstances. But after studying the home life of America in six different States and many more towns and cities, I give it as my opinion that if the outsiders in these homes could only understand and obey the two laws that I have enunciated, they would find their experience a thousand times more comfortable. For, as a matter of fact, there is a transcendent generosity and magnanimity in the average American home.

Let us get down to concrete cases. Take the average mother-in-law. What she needs to do is to realize that in the home of her child she cannot

be what she was in her own. She has had her day. It is pathetic; it is tragic to have to fade into the background, but it is a psychological necessity. If she tries to force this new household into the pattern of her own, she will break it or herself. There is absolutely nothing else to do but sink herself out of sight and shut her eyes to things she does not approve. If she really wants to influence this home, she must wait until her advice is sought for. If the young people get into trouble and ask her how to get out, her councils will have some weight. But if she volunteers them, they will certainly be resented. She may regard this fact as irrational and unjust, but she cannot alter it. This is "human nature," and if she had ten thousand years to try to make it different she would fail. It was because she did not realize these facts that the most famous of all mothers-in-law was immortalized in this classic story: An undertaker was arranging funeral details with a bereaved husband. All the other carriages were satisfactorily filled; but when that autocratic official assigned the mother-in-law to the one in which the widower was to ride, he bolted. "But what would people say, if you should refuse?" inquired the funeral director. The poor mourner, subsiding into his chair, replied miserably: "Well, put her in, if



THE WOOING. (See page 210.)

you're bound to; but you'll spoil all my pleasure in the occasion."

What householders and housekeepers want of the outsiders is sympathy, not criticism; approval, not advice. If anyone who occupies this confessedly unenviable position is willing to give sympathy and approval, they do not need to worry about their welcome. Undoubtedly it is hard for the poor outsider to see things going on that do not meet with his approbation and which he firmly believes will wreck the home. But we must never forget that it is really none of our business; that there are other good ways to conduct a home besides the ones we adopted for our own, and that while we are responsible for the home we built ourselves, we are not responsible for the one in which we are only guests.

And yet the outsider has a mission (that divinest of all missions), sympathy and approval. It is a very delicate and beautiful art to bestow them, that is sure. Think what a benediction an elderly person can be in a household if he is never critical, but always cheerful and helpful! What this man and woman who are struggling with the hard problems of life need more than anything else is encouragement. If an old grandfather or grandmother who has fought a thousand battles

to a victorious finish and reached a safe harbor after encountering a thousand tempests says to them day after day: "Be brave! Be cheerful! Keep a good hope! Life is livable! We also have made mistakes and experienced failures, and yet have come through"—do you suppose they would be willing to part with the sources of such encouragement? Who are the most important people in a game of football? I reply, "The "rooters" on the benches." It is the wild yells of inspiration from sympathetic classmates, undergraduates, and alumni that win the pennant. And it is so in homes.

Do I hear some unhappy "outsider" muttering to herself, "But suppose things go so wrong that you simply can't approve?"

Well, probably you are oversensitive and perhaps conceited. You think your own ways are the only ways. You lack charity and insight. You lack breadth and comprehension. There must be some few little things to praise. Begin with them. The initiative must always come from you. You are the passenger. You are the one who receives the favors. The irreversible law of Nature prescribes to you the duty of self-suppression, of gratitude, of appreciation.

There is unquestionably some way of ingrati-

ating yourself into the affection of the people with whom you live; but if you had rather gratify your pride by self-assertion than adopt it, you cannot be restrained from your infatuation.

And yet I do not want to exonerate the "insiders" from all blame, by thus stating the primary sources of domestic unhappiness in these complicated households. Those of us who enjoy the sacred privileges of having homes of our own are brutes if we do not show a tender consideration for those who are thrown upon our good graces for support or for consolation. Remember their regrets, their deprivations, their loneliness, their sense of out-of-placeness. Think how hard it is to be dependent! Put yourselves in their places. They must often be sad. Their sighs and tears will often make them seem ungrateful when they really are not so.

"Why should you be homesick? Aren't we doing everything we can to make you happy?" asked a woman of her Swedish servant girl.

"Ah! ma'am, I'm not sick for the home where I am, but for the home where I am not," she answered, with a touching pathos.

High above all other graces in a home I put that of making the outsider forget that he is an alien. This is a great art, and success in it entitles you to be ranked among the great masters.

## XXXII

## THE ANIMATING PRINCIPLE OF THE HOME.

IT makes no difference how beautiful the house is nor how immense its revenues, if the animating principle is wrong. A happy home is the emanation of a happy spirit. The inmates must be cheerful. They must be ready to take the bitter with the sweet; the downs with the ups; the outs with the ins.

I love a parable. Let me set forth this idea in two.

### THE CUCUMBER AND THE PUMPKIN.

One evening the front door bell rang, and, being alone in the house, I answered it.

Lifting my eyes to the level at which the faces of callers usually appeared, I saw nothing.

Suddenly a peculiar gleam of light from beneath arrested my attention, and, looking down, I saw two jack-o'-lanterns.

One of them, made out of a large ripe pumpkin, was round and glowing, like the moon. Its eyes sparkled with delight, the corners of the mouth turned upward, and the teeth showed as if the merry old fellow was about to burst into a peal of laughter.

The other was fashioned from a cucumber. It was long, lean, and melancholy. The eyes emitted a jaundiced light. The complexion was a jealous and disgusting green. The corners of the mouth were drawn downward until they seemed to drop below the chin, and the whole countenance was "sicklied o'er with the pale cast" of dissatisfied and unhappy thought.

At a single glance I saw that there were the two types into which human society is divided.

The one was an optimist and the other a pessimist.

The first was making the best of everything and the second was making the worst.

The pumpkin excited the risibilities of every beholder, produced a feeling of gladness in his heart, and sent him on his way rejoicing. The cucumber froze his very vitals and made him think that life was not worth living.

What could have made this difference? The same candle light shone in both.

It must have been the tool of the carver, and the difference in the faces was only skin deep.

But mark you, it is deeper than that in the countenances of men.

It is "a merry heart that maketh a cheerful countenance."

The spirit of the cheerful man coruscates with the light of truth and hope; that of the melancholy man pales with the waning beams of vanishing faith in life.

If only prosperity could produce happiness, and failure invariably generated despair, we could neither give praise to the one nor blame to the other.

But the pumpkin and the cucumber often grow in the same field, are hoed by the same gardener, and watered by the same showers. What *do* you make of that?

Life is an irrepressible struggle for supremacy between the pumpkin and the cucumber.

Be a pumpkin!

### THE PICKLE AND THE PEACH.

Four big, Percheron horses were pulling a heavily-loaded wagon up the Reading Road. On the seat sat two men, who were partners in the dairy business. One of them was round of face

and ruddy of skin. The other was lean, wizened, wrinkled and sour.

The name of one was Peach and the name of the other Pickle. One of the hind wheels collapsed, the axle dug into the road, the horses stopped, and Peach and Pickle sprang to the ground.

"Busted, ain't we?" said Peach, sweetly, adding a low, soft whistle.

"Busted!" thundered Pickle. "I should think so, with two tons of 'mash' on the wagon, five miles from home, the cows unfed, night coming on, and the old Harry to pay! Luck has always been against me from the time I cut my baby teeth. This is the worst of all possible worlds, and life ain't worth living.

In the meantime Peach had begun to look around, and just as Pickle was shooting off his last explosive, he slapped him on the back, and exclaimed: "Pickle, look! There's a blacksmith shop. Who would have believed it! Break down right in front of a blacksmith shop! Well, if that ain't the greatest streak of luck I ever struck in my life. I've broke down in all sorts of places, fording rivers, climbing mountains, crossing prairies, and I don't know where. There might be a postoffice or a district school or a meetin'

house nearby, but the blacksmith shop was always miles away. But, here we are, broke down right in front of one! Well! well! if this ain't a picnic."

"Peach, you are a fool!" snapped Pickle.

"Why, no I ain't," said Peach. "Sposen we had been half way between Avondale and the dairy—what then? I tell you, Pickle, bad as it is, it might be a pile worse! It's not once in a hundred years you have the luck to break down right in front of a blacksmith shop."

While Peach was talking, he was also working.

But while Pickle was cursing his luck, he stood with his hands in his pockets.

I could not help wondering what connection there was between their complexions and their dispositions.

Was Peach sweet and hopeful because he was ruddy and round, or was he ruddy and round because he was sweet and hopeful?

Was Pickle acrid and ugly because he was lean and wrinkled, or was he lean and wrinkled because he was acrid and ugly?

Why isn't a peach a pickle, and why isn't a pickle a peach?

We are getting into deep water; but I am reasonably sure that Peach could have sworn and kicked if he had wanted to, and I am inclined to think that

if Pickle had been so disposed, he could have whistled and unbuckled the traces and taken a hopeful view of the situation.

They both were in the same trouble. They both looked at the same broken wagon. All the misfortune that Pickle saw and all the good luck that Peach saw, was real.

But Pickle always stood in the shadow when he contemplated life, and Peach always stood in the sunshine.

It is more a question of purpose than of temperament; of principle than of liver.

You can make a pickle out of a human peach, and you can make a peach out of a human pickle.

Say, Pickle, if you are bound to be a pickle, do try at least to be a pickled peach.

## XXXIII

## AMUSEMENTS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.



UT of what bitter experiences of trying to repress nature was this nice old proverb distilled? "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

To run and roll, to tumble and dance, are as natural to children as breathing and eating. Their antics have no more purpose than those of a goat. They are as entirely without calculation as the rippling of water over stones. And therein lies their divine loveliness.

Mischief is natural, also—as natural as mere play. But into it has entered a purpose. The little imps! They are out for fun, now! They wish to laugh at somebody's expense. Well, this instinct is to be restrained, but not suppressed; chastened, but not destroyed. What bliss would be eliminated from childhood by its extirpation, and also from manhood! If it had not been for the mischief in two brothers who teased their little sister we should never have heard how, distracted

by their continued affirmation that her dolly was starving to death, she cut it open to see. Finding the precious body stuffed with sawdust, a substance which she had never seen before, the blue-eyed angel ran to her tormentors and exclaimed, joyfully: "She ain't starved! She's full of oatmeal!"

I don't like to have the young scoundrels tip over my ash-barrel on Halloween night, but if I should never have another chance to see some dear, timid, old lady jump at the "tick-tack" they had fastened to a window, life would be as dull as a seaside hotel without college boys and girls.

The parents who do not spend a large part of their time and strength planning for the amusement of their children are off the track. And away off, too! Some tired travellers were riding over a frightful piece of roadbed on a South African line, and as the train rolled and plunged, were jostled against each other desperately. After awhile one of them said to the other: "Ain't we going a little more smoothly?" And he, letting go of the seat in front of him to wipe the perspiration from his forehead, replied: "Y-y-yes. I think w-w-we are! We must be off the t-t-track." But if any of you have a home where discord and strife abound, things will go a great deal smoother if you will get

on the track of a whole lot of good games for the little ones.

Macaulay said that the Puritans hated the sport of "bear baiting," not so much because it gave pain to the bear as because it gave pleasure to the baiter. What we must do is to find games that will give the utmost possible innocent pleasure to the minds of our children in those hours when their work has been done or when it is impossible or harmful to work any longer. Their minds must be diverted; their native love of sport be gratified.

And first—out-of-door sports.

Blessed be the child that grows up on a farm or in a country village, and especially if there be a little lake within reach for skating, swimming and fishing. It was a fine wit who remarked that "it was strange how often big rivers flowed by great cities." If I could make a world, I should plant a little lake by the side of every cradle. To have a whole county to range in (as I did when a boy), plenty of streams and ponds; sugar groves to go to in the spring; cider mills in the autumn, and almost every member of my father's church having a good farm where I was welcome to milk the cows and ride the horses, is to enjoy the best blessings that God can bestow upon a growing boy.

One of those old farmers (to his everlasting honor be this story told) sent me to milk a cow one day, and just as the bucket was about half full came into the stable to see how I was getting on. "Well done!" he said, whereat I was so startled that I fell off the stool, and the cow put her foot in the pail.

Was he angry? Not a bit. He leaned against the door and laughed until the tears ran from his eyes.

He was a boy at fifty, and every one of his half-dozen children grew up to be noble men and women, very largely, I cannot help thinking, because he loved all innocent fun and permitted them to enjoy it.

To romp and skate, to swim and fish, to play "hare and hounds" and base ball are physical, mental and spiritual necessities to growing boys. A horizontal bar in a back yard, a punching-bag and a pair of boxing gloves in an attic, a set of tools in a basement, have been the salvation of thousands of youngsters who, without them, would have gone where the prodigal son did.

And second, there are the in-door sports. Rainy days, winter evenings, and Sunday afternoons have to be reckoned with in child life. The parents who know how to solve the problems they present, will

see their children come to noble manhood and womanhood.

I here lay a garland upon the tombs or on the heads of all dead or living inventors of good games for children. We celebrate the value to society of the men who have invented the steam engine, spinning jenny, telegraph and telephone. But what of those humble geniuses who first constructed a top, a hobby-horse, a doll, a bagatelle-board, jackstraws, ping-pong, flinch and even tiddle-tewinks! They, too, have served their generations, for have they not kept the devil from finding mischief for idle hands?

Take dominoes, checkers, backgammon and chess, and see if you can measure their blessing to humanity in affording diversion to restless or to jaded minds. I am for almost every game but "cards." Before those bespotted and bedazzled pasteboard mysteries I stand aghast! If I were superstitious, I should think them haunted by some malicious spirit. No adequate reason can be advanced why pieces of thick paper decorated in that particular way should have been the source of so much misery and crime. Why is it (let him answer who can) that they so often (I had almost said invariably) lead to the misuse of time, to quarrelling, to cheating and to gambling? What

ingredient is mixed with that paper? What chemical is there in those paints? What spell or incantation was breathed over them by their inventor, that always and everywhere they lead up to, if they do not acutually involve society in, so much wrong?

Well, they have come to stay, no doubt, and we must make the best of them. We must, indeed, or they will make the worst of us.

The wisest people whom I know have concluded that it is better to teach their children to play cards at home than to provoke them to learn to play in the barn loft, on the sly.

Ah! But amusement is a divine art! Study it, practice it, master it. Make your brilliant parlor or your humble sitting-room a place where your children and their friends will find happy entertainment, and we shall wait at your door to see noble youths come out.

## XXXIV

## KEEPING OUR ASCENDANCY OVER OUR CHILDREN.



LL true parents long to retain the love, respect and reverence of their children, but nothing is harder and few things are more uncommon. While these little people are in the uncritical period of life they look up to us as worshippers. That period passes, and they look down on us as judges. Let that day dawn when, even for an instant, they suspect our divinity, and a new era has opened.

Do you remember the first time you ever questioned the justice, the wisdom, or the integrity of your father or mother? How the foundation of your thought-world seemed to rock beneath your feet! What? Was that being whom you had looked upon as the incarnation of perfection, human, fallible and even sinful? Undoubtedly that was one of the most tragic experiences of your life. And your children are making this discovery

about you. You cannot presume upon their remaining in ignorance of your defects. Their faculties are being sharpened, their experience is being enlarged, they are becoming capable of analyzing and judging even the characters of their parents. The day will arrive when you cannot retain your ascendancy over them unless you deserve it. Childhood bestows reverence on age as a free-will offering, but youth surrenders it only upon compulsion. Day by day those little beings are discovering your deficiencies and withdrawing that adoration with which they looked up to you from the cradle. At fifteen or twenty the process of analysis is complete. They do not tell you what they think, but they know. You are catalogued.

Stop for a moment and think how few parents you have met who have preserved such a position in the thought-world of their children as their hearts covet. I recall an old lady about whom a large family revolved, like stars around a central sun, until at seventy-five or eighty that sun set and left them in unlighted gloom. They never took an important step without consulting her. Men and women of stooped shoulders and gray hairs crossed continents and oceans to lay the problems of their lives before that clear intelligence and to seek consolation from that great heart.

But in most cases the children break away and seek other advisers, having learned to regard their parents with contempt or pity. The gods of their infant days are buried beneath the ruins of their temples.

And the parents? They mourn the departure of the "good old times" when children honored their fathers and their mothers, according to the commands of the decalogue. They complain of the disrespect of young people for age, ignoring with a fatuous obstinacy the possibility of their being at fault themselves.

But let us be guilty of no injustice and let us cherish no delusions. It is a general principle, if not a universal fact, that parents lose the reverence of children only by becoming unworthy of it. For, it is as natural for youth to look up to age with reverence as for a daisy to look up to the sun in adoration. Let us see what we must do to maintain an ascendancy over the minds of our children.

In the first place, we must be strong. All children love strength and despise weakness, and, for that matter, who does not? At the first evidence that you have not the true courage of life to meet its sorrows and bear its burdens you lose caste with a growing boy or girl. "I never dreamed that my



CONSOLATION FOR THE TROUBLED. (See page 227.)

father could go to pieces like that," I heard a sixteen-year-old girl say scornfully to her parent, when he "caved in" under a burden that heaven had laid upon his shoulders. It may have been an unsympathetic judgment, but it was inevitable. Youth has no pity and no honor for cowardice or despair.

In the second place, you must be fair. Partiality or injustice excites revulsion in the hearts of young people. "Fair play" is their golden rule. They may be deceitful and even treacherous themselves, but they will not tolerate it in another. There is no wound so deep as that cut by the sword of injustice. Let your children once conceive the idea that in your court the judge sits blindfolded, and your hold on them is lost.

In the third place, you must show a sweet reasonableness. All children (and boys especially) have an instinctive feeling that a certain consideration ought to be shown to youth. They know that inexperience deserves to be dealt with gently. While they despise us for excessive leniency, they trust us only when we remember that they are young.

In the fourth place, it goes without saying that we must be loving, but it is too often forgotten that we must be good. If you are cross, avaricious,

dishonest, or impure, you not only will not retain the respect of your children, but you do not deserve to. I wonder more and more at the incredible stupidity with which people expect their children to remain blind to their shortcomings. You know that faults are hateful, and yet you demand your children to revere you, in spite of defects that mar your character and blemish your soul. You must, then, expect to be able to conceal your vices! But what right have you to hope to deceive those bright eyes? And if they do not make these discoveries themselves, by and by they will hear whispers that will arouse their suspicions. And the more successfully you conceal the evil the more powerful will the revulsion of the child's soul be when at last the disclosure is made. For then you will seem not only a knave, but a hypocrite.

Do you resent this explanation of the loss of your ascendancy over your children? Nevertheless, it is the true one. The simplest facts of human life forbid the dear delusion that our children are irreverent and disloyal without a cause, or that that cause is the stubborn depravity of their own natures.

I do not wish to minimize the inherent egotism of the child nature. I do not wish to condone the wickedness of those exceptional children who

depise and abuse their parents out of a sheer and uncontrollable propensity to evil. But I do sincerely believe that the most of us have forfeited respect before we have lost it. Who ever gets so old and wise that his heart does not yearn for parental advice and sympathy? Ah! but it must be wise advice and intelligent sympathy.

If you wish to be looked up to and reverenced by your children to the very last, you must remain nobler and saner and stronger and sweeter than themselves.

## XXXV

## NERVE STRAIN.



T is the incessant strain upon the nervous system that, after all, constitutes the chief danger of home life. There may be households from which it is absent, but most of them are in the cemetery. While we live, there is no "let up." "The rest of the grave! Don't talk about it to me! I shall no sooner get settled down to it than Gabriel will blow his trumpet, and I'll have to get up and go at it again!" exclaimed a tired New England housewife at the close of a long New England sermon.

Considering the whole parallelogram of forces that are forever pulling at the nerves of husbands and wives, the wonder is that more of them are not insane. The struggle to make ends meet; to get the children well fed, well clothed and well educated; to nurse the sick; to harmonize incompatible tempers; to get along with ugly neighbors; to meet the exactions of society, business, politics,

and religion; to be forever rubbing up against each other like pebbles rolled by the waves of the ocean —these and a thousand other frictions—all make us think that the nervous system ought to have been made out of piano strings.

How shall we quiet our nerves?

In the first place, let us get a clear vision and a firm hold of the fact that the trouble really is "nerves." It is because they are tired and overwrought that everything about the home seems monotonous and intolerable. Most of the daily happenings are inevitable and can neither be eliminated nor radically altered. A certain number of dishes will get broken; about so many doors are bound to slam; there will be an average number of burns, bruises, fevers, calls, visits, misunderstandings, and a fixed proportion of general "cussedness."

The cure for nerve strain does not lie in some impossible revolution in the nature of things and events, but must be attained by resting the nerves themselves.

*a.* Therefore, get plenty of sleep at night. Many a home has been wrecked on the rock of "late hours." It is a vicious and unpardonable habit to sit up nights and miss the recuperative influence of unconsciousness. Two or even one extra hour

in bed would have saved many a couple from the divorce court. The ratio between sleep and good nature is as fixed as between that of time in the oven and brown on the pie crust. People who are out at the theatre or the card party night after night until the "wee sma" hours, have no one to blame but themselves for being irritable and unstrung. Lock the doors, pull down the shutters, put out the lights at nine o'clock and go to bed. Do it religiously. Do it inexorably. And the whole complexion of life will alter.

*b.* Get a little nap in the middle of the day. And do not *sneer*, as you read these words. Of course, it is impossible for some, and it is hard for all. But to a degree that not one person in a thousand realizes, this privilege lies within the reach of the great mass of the people. You could do it if you would. Had we that fixed and resolute hatred of a weak set of nerves which we ought to have, we would get that half hour's nap at all hazards. The siesta ought to be made a national custom. Laws that would force us to bed for an hour at midday would reduce the expenditure of the government for insane asylums and prisons to an astonishing degree. Let every patriot help to work a reform. Go to your room and close the door, not only as a good parent but a patriotic citizen.

*c.* Get plenty of out-of-door life. The power of a walk along a country road or even around a city block to quiet the throbbing nerves possesses the element of the miraculous. I am as dependent on it as on sleep or food. I give it as my solemn testimony that I have never had a fit of nervousness (and I have had a million) that I have not been able to allay by an hour's walk into the country. It makes no difference whether the rain is falling or the sun blazing or the snow flying—when my nerves get to going, I strike out for a walk. It saves time. It saves money. It saves friction. It saves life. It saves home.

It was said of the Rosetti family that they wore their nerves on the outside of their clothes. Probably they were poor sleepers and poor walkers.

*d.* Take a vacation now and then. I do not mean in Europe. I am not one of those doctors who prescribe a winter in Florida or Egypt to a drygoods clerk or a typewriter with such maddening nonchalance. This is what I mean. Search the neighborhood in which you live until you find some quiet little hotel (if you can afford it), or, if not, a modest farm-house to which you can slip away occasionally for a couple of days or even a single night, and have a perfect and absolute change and rest.

# Nerve Strain

Each of us has experiences in life, the value of which we will not permit anyone to question, and this is one of *mine*. I know beyond all peradventure, the value of these little vacations. Many a time I have gone off to a modest country tavern on Saturday afternoon, a nervous wreck; crawled into bed, eaten a simple supper, and come back a new man, all for the moderate price of fifty cents or a dollar at the outside. The strain lets up. The muscles relax. The nerves cool down. I have actually felt nervousness (whatever it is) drip off the ends of my fingers as my limp arms hung down at my side, like drops of water.

John, let me impart to you a suggestion of incalculable value. If Mary (God bless her!) is run down and irritable (forgive the word); if she cries at nothing and wishes she had never been born, just you find that place I hinted at and take her away for a couple of days. You won't know her when she comes back. She needs to get away from the cook stove and the children. The children? Yes. What shall you do with them? I don't know. Boil some eggs; lock them (the children—not the eggs) in the cellar and leave them to worry it out. They will gain all they lose when Mary comes back rested and quiet and happy. Two days will do it. There is magic in a "little

trip." Does it look impossible? But it is not. "Love finds a way." If you only knew how much good it would do, you would accomplish it in the face of national opposition.

We do not suffer from nervousness because there is no cure. We suffer because we do not possess the resolution to resort to Nature's simple remedies.

## XXXVI

## YOUNG MARRIED FOLK SHOULD LEAVE PARENTAL HOME.



HALL the young married couple stay in the parental home? A thousand times "No."

If they are not yet able to set up for themselves let them wait, wait until a better day, before they wed. Nothing can be more fatal to their self-respect than to be dependent on the "old folks." Unconsciously, perhaps, but no less surely they will cringe before the hand that casts them crumbs, and sooner or later become parasites. They will accustom themselves to a scale of living which they cannot support when thrown at last upon their own resources. They will shape their lives and their habits to those of other people instead of developing that individuality which is essential to every true household. They will submit themselves to needless trials which are liable to develop bad tempers, and all this will issue in an aggressive assertion or a cowardly suppression of their true selves.

## Leave Parental Home

It seems an easy and desirable thing to stay in the home nest until you try it, but it is a situation that develops a hundred unforeseeable and dangerous complications. It does not make any difference how many eggs you mix into an omelet, but it makes a great deal of difference how many individuals you mix into a family. In Oriental lands it seems possible to add family to family in a home, as you add acres to acres on a farm. But the Orient is not America. National temperament must be taken into account. We are higher-spirited and more independent. We demand the right to assert our individual life, and the way to do it is for every young married couple to go at the earliest possible moment to their own house or apartment and there lay the foundations of their separate family life.

It is in the highest degree essential for them to be alone while they are adjusting themselves to each other in this new and strange relationship. They will have trouble enough in doing it without having the needless pain of spying and censorship. It will be a miracle if they do not have disagreements and misunderstandings under the most favorable auspices. Now and then two natures may have been so benignly moulded as to melt into each other without friction, but the

chances are against it. When those almost inevitable troubles come, it is infinitely better for the young lovers to settle their differences without interference. Let them discover the seriousness of a quarrel, and then let them learn the divine art of making up.

But besides the obligations and the benefits, think of the pleasures of those first adorable experiences of housekeeping. The period of the founding of a home is the golden age of humanity. What innocent follies are then indulged in! What absurd blunders are committed! How large a part of the best memories of later life cluster round those primitive experiments! One of my parishioners told me the story of her first supper in her new home. The little house had been all furnished before the young couple started on their wedding trip, and they came back to it in the afternoon of an ever-memorable day. The husband rushed to his place of business to attend to some important affairs and came home in the evening hungry as a bear.

In the meantime, the dainty bride, hovering about the little nest more like a bird than a woman, had prepared the evening meal with her own hands. The table was spread with snowy linen and adorned with wedding presents of silver

and cut glass. Over all this loveliness a candelabrum sheds a soft glow, and a bouquet a delicious odor.

The one article of food was an angel cake!

Supper was announced in the sweetest voice of the bride; the ravenous groom sat down, and the following conversation was held:

She—"Isn't the table beautiful?"

He—"Elegant! But where's the food?"

She—"Why! It's here!"

He—"What! that measly little cake! I could eat a quarter of beef!"

A stormy scene followed; but to-day that memory is one of the most valuable assets of their domestic life.

And who of us has not such recollections of those halcyon days, when, young, inexperienced, sentimental, loving and hopeful, we set up our lares and penates in some modest little cottage? I could give expert testimony on this subject myself. There is not money enough in the Bank of England to bribe me to forgetfulness of those far-off events in the morning of my domestic world. We two children, I remember, bought the smallest cook stove and the largest turkey in the little Texas village where, on a home missionary field, we began to play at housekeeping.

And when we tried to put the Brobdingnagian turkey into the Lilliputian oven, it would not go. One-half projected into the kitchen—and almost filled that, by the way, for everything was on the smallest possible scale. It is more than a quarter of a century since then, but I can still feel the emotions of amazement with which we looked into each other's eyes, and still hear the loud explosion of merry laughter with which we greeted this impossible situation.

What did we do? Why, the man of the household took his hand-saw, bisected the turkey at right angles to his breast bone, pushed him into the oven, slammed the door with a loud bang, and uttered a triumphant "There!"

Could that have happened in the parental home? And could life have been as romantic and sweet without it? No! Nothing can compensate us for the loss of those dear, delightful first experiences with the real problems of laying the foundations of a home.

Go off by yourselves, young lovers! If you have brave and noble hearts you do not need to fear narrowness, or even deprivation. The more you have to economize and struggle the better. Our own most delightful periods in both experience and memory was that in which we had no

guaranteed salary, but lived out of Sunday collections gathered in a hat. To sit down and count those coins (and buttons) on Sunday evening, and then, with a superhuman skill, compel them to cover the expenses of the next week was the sort of discipline that we needed, and we made merry over it, because our hearts were young and full of love.

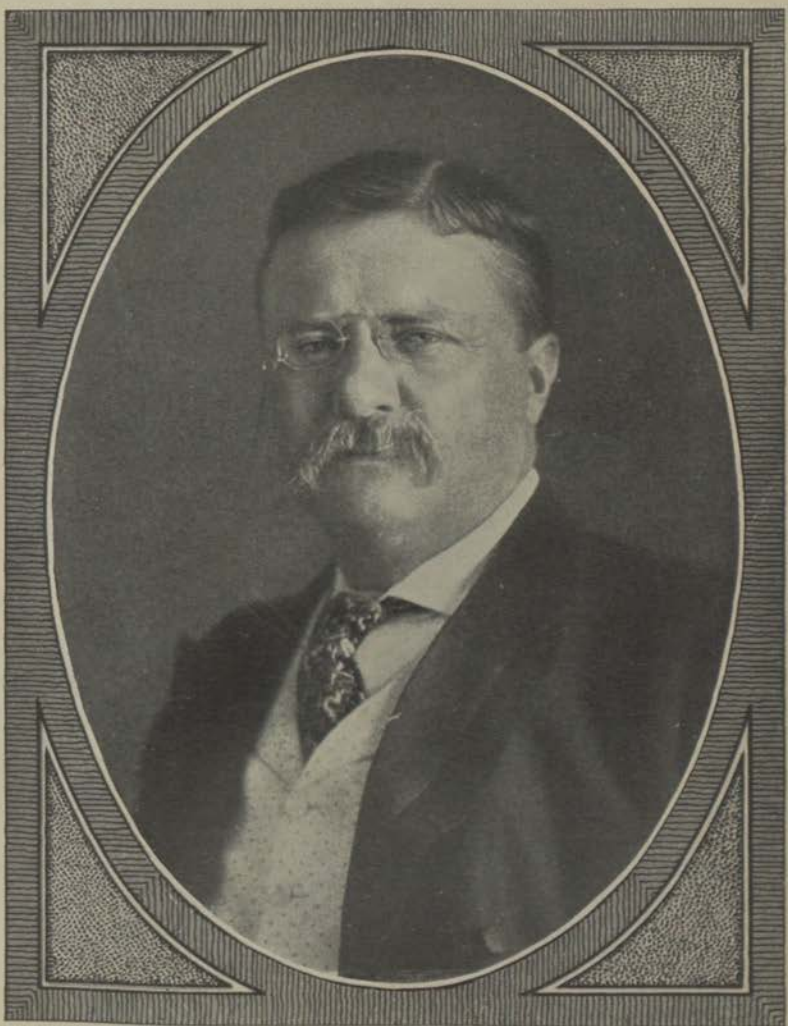
I seldom envy the millionaire his palace, but I never see a young couple begin housekeeping in a little cottage without a sigh and a regret.

## XXXVII

## ART IN THE HOME.

THE hunger of the body is twofold, for food and drink, while that of the soul is threefold, for truth, goodness and beauty. The former are clamorous and irresistible, while the latter are undemonstrative and repressible. It is possible, and it is even easy, to quench these inherent longings; but to do so, is to commit spiritual suicide.

The love of beauty is the source and inspiration of all art, and art is the embodiment of beautiful thought in sensuous forms. All souls have at least some vague glimpses of the "eternal beauties;" but there are constantly appearing in the world elect spirits who see it with the eye of genius and who have been endowed with the impulse to reveal their vision to their fellow-men through poetry, music, painting and sculpture. These men are among the greatest benefactors of the ages, for humanity is starving for a deeper insight into Nature's loveliness. What we need more than



THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

COURAGEOUS, STRONG AND TRUE. (See page 235.)

light upon our intellects is dew upon our hearts, and beauty is dew. All "things of beauty are joys forever;" are "wayside sacraments;" are "their own excuse for being," and they possess a mysterious power to cleanse and sweeten.

This brief essay is an appeal to all its readers to reflect more deeply upon the value of real works of art in the home and to the formation of an invincible purpose to secure as many as they can acquire by any and every reasonable sacrifice and effort.

I know only too well, with what resentment this appeal will be read by many people whose one ceaseless struggle in life is keeping the wolf from the door. I have sat in my little cottage and read the pleas of Ruskin for massive furniture, delicate drapery and exquisite pictures, saying to myself with indignation: "If he had been compelled to live on the collections gathered in a hat on a rainy Sunday from a congregation of miners or cowboys, he would have known quite well why I put up with ingrain carpets and machine-made furniture." But he was right in his courageous insistance, and so was William Morris in harping ceaselessly upon that single string: "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be either useful or beautiful." And it is our duty to

remember with profound gratitude these two indubitable facts.

First, that there has been no other age in the world in which the possibility of acquiring works of art lay within the reach of so many people.

Second, that every year is bringing that possibility within the reach of an increasing number.

This is certainly true of the great masterpieces of *literature*. How few homes there are in America too poor to purchase those one hundred great books in which Lubbock declares that all the great literature of the world is enshrined! It is equally true of the great masterpieces of *painting* and *sculpture*. Photography and lithography have reproduced these immortal pictures so perfectly and so cheaply that the Madonnas of Raphael, the landscapes of Carot, the portraits of Rubens; in fact, the greatest achievements of the greatest geniuses of all ages may hang in modest numbers, even on the walls of the miner's cabin. As to the great statues, there are plaster-of-Paris casts of the head of Young Augustus, the Winged Victory, the Quoit-thrower, the bust of Hermes, Apollo Belvidere, the Laocoon, which may all be purchased for three, four, or five dollars each, and serve as, by no means to be despised, substitutes for marble.

In this list of the great treasures which feed the soul with beauty, the Oriental rug deserves a place. After the mind has been once trained to perceive its loveliness, few other things will serve to rouse the æsthetic feelings more powerfully. Its influence surpasses the comprehension of those who have never fed their eyes upon that firm texture and those gorgeous colors. I do not believe that it is going beyond the mark to say that in the long run it would repay any family which earnestly seeks the very best things in life to live on bare floors for five years in order to save money to buy one really splendid Oriental rug.

At any rate, however inaccessible the temple of beauty is through other portals, the door of music is always open. A piano, an organ, a mandolin, guitar, or even a banjo, will admit you to its sacred enchantments.

After all, it is not so much the lack of money as the lack of taste that accounts for the presence of the wretched gim-cracks that serve to make so many American homes hideous. We fill our houses with all sorts of bric-a-brac with as little regard to their significance or value as boys fill their pockets with plunder on a holiday excursion. If there were no ways in which this taste could be

educated, it would be almost cruel to reproach each other with its absence. But the art exhibits in every great city, and the books and magazines that circulate in every little village, and even in the most remote farm-houses, make bad taste a sin. We permit ourselves wilfully to remain in ignorance of the "best."

And, after we have secured our works of art, still we are not out of danger. We must compel our souls to give them a constant attention. It is so easy to become accustomed even to sunrises and constellations, and also to Vandykes and Corots. At last, upon weak minds, art acts as an opiate rather than an inspiration. We look at our pictures until we do not see them, just as people listen to the roar of Niagara until they do not hear it or until its thunderings put them to sleep.

Let me drop a few hints.

If you cannot afford originals, do not despise good copies.

Give preference to the great classics.

If your own taste is not cultivated, get advice from specialists.

Be humble enough to accept judgment of the great art critics, even though you cannot perceive what they see to admire.

# Art in the Home

Never permit yourselves to gaze long at ugliness.

Keep beauty perpetually in your eye, so far as possible.

Steep your souls in the loveliness of Nature and of art.

## XXXVIII

## GETTING YOUR SECOND WIND.



HERE come times in the life of the household when everything and everybody appears about to collapse. The family, like the individual, gets run down. The ambition, the vitality, the resources are all exhausted. It seems utterly useless any longer to scheme or labor or hope. We feel as if we might just as well abandon any expectation of ever rising above a low level of mediocrity. We are drudges ourselves and our children will be drudges after us. What's the use of contending against fate!

Those are critical and pitiful hours. They are to be resisted with blind fury if we are no longer capable of opposing them with intelligent courage. But to arm you for such seasons and for such struggles, let me remind you of one of the sublimest facts of life. There are "reserve forces" in the soul. You are not at your wit's end nor your rope's end as soon as you think you are. Never

give up until you get your "second wind." Your boys do not.

We put our thumbs in the arm-holes of our vests and look very wise, when we tell our sons and nephews what we know about life.

Shrewd little youngsters! They are conscious all the time that they know a thousand things which we have forgotten and would have profited by remembering; "where the first wild flowers bloom," "where the oriole builds its nest," "what bait the brook-trout loves," "how squirrels gather nuts," and many another bit of sacred lore which Nature whispers into childish ears.

If you will stop some day and watch them play a game of "hare and hounds," you will see these children perform two acts which reveal a sort of divine knowledge.

The little "hare," followed by the yelping pack of "hounds," starting from the door of the village school-house, runs, dodges, and doubles until at last a "pain in his side" shuts him up like a jack-knife.

You and I run on carrying our pain with us, abusing heart or lungs or liver, until we are broken down for good, and out of the race for ever.

Not so the little "hare," who, blending his divine wisdom with a childish superstition, finds

a flat stone in his pathway, pauses long enough to stoop down, turn it over, drop a little spittle under it from his parched mouth, replace it, and, rising with the pain all gone, puts forth another burst of speed that will take him to the "cover," where he can throw the yelping hounds from his trail.

If that noble merchant who fell dead at his desk last month had only paused long enough in his flight from his troubles to have rested his tired brain and overtaxed heart, he might be alive and well to-day.

It was the short *respite* that saved the little "hare," and would have saved the big merchant.

In the meantime, one of the little "hounds" is panting heavily up a hill, his sides collapsed, and his breath all gone. His companions look at him with an eye of pity or of triumph, thinking he will soon be out of the race.

Not he. He knows a thing or two. A few steps (he cannot tell how many), a little more hard puffing (he cannot tell how much), and he will get his "second wind." So on he goes, lagging a trifle, but undismayed, until at last his heart begins to beat a little easier, his lungs to play more freely, and his relief has come. With leaps like

the greyhound whose part he is playing in the game, he follows the "hare," and catches him, too.

Poor old Dobson forgot all about his "second wind," when he saw his rivals outstripping him in the race, and so he dropped out by the way, sighed as they sped on, relaxed his energies, and spent the rest of his life cursing his destiny for not having received from Nature a greater endowment of speed and endurance. Any schoolboy could have given him a pointer.

Look out for the man who remembers and believes in his "second wind."

When a watch runs down or the fires go out in the boilers repose and silence follow. They are nothing but machines.

But there is some sort of strange apparatus in this human organism that winds itself up by running down. In the great bursts that we all have to make at times, spiritual energies recuperate, tired muscles recover tone, the smoking flax rekindles, and on we go.

There is a "second wind."

I have heard that a faded opal will recover its lustre if laid away in the dark, and that a dimmed pearl will regain brightness if sunk awhile in the sea.

## Getting Your Second Wind

I know that exhausted vitality can be recuperated as mysteriously.

Many a time I have run until I got my "second wind," and reached the goal that seemed so far away.

And I have seen the same thing in family life, again, and again and again.

There are plenty of families which have but recently moved into palaces, who, but a short time ago, were upon the verge of landing in a hovel. They remembered their second wind.

## XXXIX

## THREE WAYS TO BEAR TROUBLE.

 OW do you bear your troubles? There are three pretty well-defined ways.

In the first place, you may try to dodge them. The moment you find life irksome, drop everything and run. Does the old harness chafe? Get a new one. Is your work hard? Throw up your job. Has married life brought you unexpected cares? Slip off alone some night and leave your family to shift for itself. The world is full of such sneaks. I will say nothing of their meanness, but will try to expose their folly.

What do they make by it? There is no place and no calling where they can escape trouble. If they should take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, trouble would be waiting for them. In one disguise or another she assaults us at every step of life, and dogs us like a shadow. You may climb from a hut to a palace and exchange a spade for a sceptre, but if

you are an honest man you will have to confess that the burdens that you have to bear are as heavy as ever. The new harness chafes in a different spot, but it chafes. What support have you in that delusion that leads you to expect to escape trouble by flight? There is none in human experience. It is a mental hallucination. There may be other reasons that are good for your leaving your present lot in life, but the hope of escaping sorrow and care is madness. Settle down to your work. Accept the situation. "Men are born to troubles as the sparks fly upward." Do not waste a moment in idle dreams of exemption.

In the second place, you may try to "drown" trouble.

It is the scheme of the drunkard and the opium-eater. Writhing with what seems to be unendurable sorrow, they submerge consciousness under the oblivious flood of the poppy or mandragora. Now, I do not mean to say that there are not troubles which it is legitimate to escape through stupor. To consciously suffer the agony of a surgical operation when it might be annihilated by an anæsthetic would be irrational. But, whether I can prove it or not, it is a crime to reason from this admission, to the right to stupefy the senses by alcohol or opium, in order to escape mental

pain. There is something contemptible beyond words in the unwillingness of a man to look his troubles in the face. To whimper and snivel and render one's self unconscious with a bottle or a hypodermic syringe every time a little cloud of trouble gathers, language fails us utterly in attempting to depict this pusillanimity. Besides this, to "drown trouble" is a blasphemous denial of its sacred mission. Trouble is disciplinary; it is reformatory. Trouble chastens. Trouble transfigures. But what can this sublime ministrant do for a sot in the gutter, or an opium fiend in a "joint?"

Once more. "To drown trouble" is not to escape it, but to multiply it a hundredfold.

Troubles gather to the drunkard as crows gather to carrion. More trouble, more drink; more drink, more trouble, is the inexorable law under which he lives. His folly is worse than that of the ostrich, who flatters himself that he is safe from the hunter because he cannot perceive him, for, while his head is in the sand, the one trouble that torments him becomes a legion. Poverty, contempt, disease, and God knows what, gather thick and fast upon him. In plain and simple language, a man is a fool to try and "drown his troubles." Somebody has spoken a cross word to

you. It is intolerable; go and stupefy your sensibilities with a glass of whiskey! Someone has beaten you in a trade. It is beyond human endurance; go and prick yourself into unconsciousness with a hypodermic syringe. Bah! When one stops to think of such poltroonery, it is enough to make him blush for his race.

In the third place, "You may cast your burden on the Lord" in the full assurance that "He shall sustain thee."

Now, do not throw this paper down and turn away. This is not a sermon. It is a scientific lecture. It is as demonstrable as keeping dry under an umbrella that "In the time of trouble God will hide you under a pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle he will hide you; he will set you up upon a rock." There is not a day of human life that millions do not verify this promise. While multitudes are trying in vain to "dodge" or "drown" their troubles, these Christians throw theirs boldly on the shoulders of the great "Burden Bearer," and go forward on the journey with songs in their hearts. Do you doubt it? Stop a moment to think. Suppose a man reflects on the phenomena of life until he arrives at the conclusion that it is evolving according to a sublime moral order; that an infinite mind and a paternal

heart direct it; that his own career is mapped out and his own destiny safe—do you doubt that he can throw his tired head and heart on those great truths as on a pillow? While you are skulking or trying to drown your troubles, the "Deacon" looks his squarely in the face and says: "It's all right. It is a part of the scheme. These troubles are only incidents. They are the shadows on the sunny landscape, the minor chords in the sublime harmony. Other men no stronger than I have endured them, and I can. God loves me. He will pull me through. I will look for the hidden meaning. I will learn the sublime lesson."

There are people right on your street, friend, who have stood up under the burdens that have smashed you and "driven you to drink" with smiles on their faces and peace in their souls, by just *thinking these thoughts*. Talk about "drowning trouble!" Talk about "dodging trouble!" *They look theirs in the face.* To such souls no burden is unbearable; no task impossible. You do not see that there is any such supporting power in these thoughts? Neither does your little Bill see how there is such supporting power in the ocean until at last he learns to lie flat on his back and let it float him. The great ocean of love, as well as that of water, has its mysteri-

ous buoyancy. Throw yourself confidently on the love of God. It will not let you sink.

I know a man who has a very bad habit, which has so fastened itself upon him, that he says, with a whimper: "It's no use, I'm done for; I can't control myself."

I told him of the battle fought and the victory won by an old-time friend of mine.

He had been drinking for twenty years or more, and had at last made that most horrible of all discoveries—that his manhood was almost gone.

He said what every such man whom I have ever met says: "There's no need of another hell."

One night he came home, ate a few mouthfuls, rose from his chair, took his wife's face between his hands and kissed her many times, just as he used to when he was a young lover.

Opening the door into his little "den," he turned around and said, "When I come from this room, I will either be carried a corpse, or walk out a free man."

The door closed. The key turned in the lock. What do you suppose his wife did? You scarcely need to be told that she gathered her little brood of children around her, "as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings," and slipped quietly away to her chamber, where they all knelt down

before the great God, to whom we all go in the last extremity.

For hours they prayed—hours that seemed like eternities.

In the meantime, that dear fellow, from whose own lips I heard the tale, took a pistol from his drawer, cocked it, laid it on the table, and beside it placed an open Bible.

He fingered the trigger of the one, turned the pages of the other, paced the floor, knelt down by his study chair, recalled the past, measured the present, forecast the future, and settled down to a fight with his lower nature.

A bitter fight it was. Thermopylæ, Marathon, Salamis, Waterloo, Gettysburg saw nothing more dramatic, nothing more terrible.

It was life against death, honor against infamy, heaven against hell.

Toward morning a strange calm fell upon him. A feeling of rest stole into his heart. He became conscious of power, as convalescents do of strength. He felt an undisturbed confidence in his emancipation. He trembled with joy, as a prisoner does who sees his shackles shivered on the ground.

You may explain the incident as you will; but it is a fact.

One man thinks that he simply asserted his

manhood and another that God came to his rescue.

I am not explaining it. I only told my friend that it happened.

I know that men lie down exhausted, and out of the storehouse of Nature, while they sleep, strength creeps into them.

A puny plant lifted from the cold clay under a wall and placed in the rich loam of a sunny garden springs into a new life.

A wheel revolving amidst coiled wires gathers measureless electrical force from the atmosphere.

Is it incredible that a man wrestling all night in prayer should break into some mine of strength, or draw into his soul new energy?

Life is a fathomless mystery, but there is always strength and hope for those who struggle.

Make another effort to be free, and then another and another.

Do not lose faith in the possibilities of life; but if you have lost it, regain it.

Some time you will come out of the smoke of your battlefield with the radiant face of a conqueror.

## XL

## THE COURAGE OF LIFE.

INDIVIDUALS become discouraged and so do families. You may see the traces of this malady in the features of both parents and children; in the clothes they wear; in the crumbling houses they inhabit; in the disorderly grounds that surround them.

The mother says: "The sunshine has gone out of my life. My days are filled with sorrow and my nights with agony. Those I loved best are dead. No one cares for me. I have no prospects for the future. The pathway winds into ever deepening shadows."

The father says: "I am a failure. My life has consisted of a series of blunders. I have gone steadily down hill. I have disappointed my friends, and there is nothing to look forward to but death."

The children say: "What is the use of our trying to rise above our surroundings? Look at our

parents! Look at our home! We never have been anything and we never can be! Who cares?"

Perhaps you do not know how many such homes there are! I wonder if there are any at all where there have not been at least brief periods in which this feeling of despair has taken possession of the inmates! There are very few families whose prosperity continues uninterrupted. Months and even years come when every effort at improving conditions proves futile.

Such periods are "testing times," and in them you will see of what stuff the family is made! I know of a home in which a man faces hunger every day. In his whole life he has not been at any time twenty-four hours removed from want. He is an unskilled toiler, with a big family. A girl of twelve cooks—when there is any food. She is patient, brave and loyal. She smiles in the midst of misery, and often sings because of the hope that lives in her heart.

There is a mother so twisted and misshapen by rheumatism that she no longer looks like a human being. She sews with what she calls her "good hand," which is so crippled that she can barely hold a needle. She is in constant pain, and yet there is no sign of despair! The children hope that good food and warm clothing will be

theirs some day. The man believes that he will sometime find a steady job. The girl believes that some time things will be better; while the poor crippled woman is patient in her suffering and content to do the best she can so long as God lets her live. These people have the "courage of life."

In the very gift of "being" resides the right to live! You are alive—therefore you have something to expect from existence. You have a home—therefore you may believe that it contains for you blessings. "Sitting Bull" once said to James Creelman: "If I had no place in the world, I would not be here. The fact of my 'existence' entitles me to exercise any influence I possess. I am satisfied that I was brought into life for a purpose; otherwise—why am I here?"

These words have the triumphant ring of a passage from an old Hebrew prophet or the Roman Epictetus! Yes—we are here for a purpose! Let us then seek to accomplish it with an invincible courage! We shall not be exempt from pain and suffering and we shall have to struggle against terrible odds. But we ought at least to have the courage of animals and birds!

A light-housekeeper on a lonely promontory possessed a flock of homing pigeons. His wife

fell sick and he released one on whose ankle he had tied a message to a doctor on the main land. Within a few moments after her arrival the bird dropped dead, and upon examination it was found that she had flown twenty-one miles with seven gunshots in her body, fired by some reckless sportsman as she sped upon her way!

How many of us *men* and *women* flutter to the ground when the first shaft of sorrow strikes us, and give up the struggle of living! The elemental virtue of the individual and of the family is undoubtedly this, "courage of life!" Nourish it in your own bosoms and develop it in the hearts of your children! Point out to them that each family has a life of its own; a true identity; a real personality, and that God will lend his benediction to every effort to preserve it. Make them feel responsible for its life by seeing your own devotion.

In all the annals of human courage and purpose which I have ever read, no story has moved me more than that of the vain efforts of her friends to persuade the mother of Dwight L. Moody to distribute her children among her relatives after the death of her husband. With a wild passion of resentment she denounced their judgment, gathered her little flock around her, and fought her way through poverty to independence!

Take another illustration—this time from the home life of Hawthorne, and revealed in a letter of his wife's.

"He (her husband) rose betimes in the morning, and kindled fires in the kitchen and breakfast room, and by the time I came down the teakettle boiled, potatoes were baked, and rice cooked, and my lord sat with a book, superintending.

"It was a magnificent comedy to watch him, so ready and willing to do these things, to save me an effort, and at the same time so superior to all, and *heroical in aspect:* so inconsonant to what was about him! I have a new sense of his universal power from this novel phase of his life. It seems as if there are no kind of action to which he were not equal. At home among the stars—and for my sake patient and effective over a cook stove."

The conscience of every man recognizes courage as the foundation of all manliness, and manliness as the perfection of human character. Yet how few individuals and families possess it! The too prevalent type of character finds its ideal representative in the soldier who was leading the van in a disastrous retreat.

"What are you running for?" yelled his colonel, in a rage.

"'Cause I can't fly!" he replied, without stopping.

Two of my friends were discussing suicide.

"Did you never seriously contemplate it?" asked one of the other, a maiden lady with the hardest kind of a life-battle to fight. With a grim and courageous humor, she replied: "Not I! I am going to live—just to see what will become of me!"

Sublime faith, hope, confidence!

Who knows? It may be that you are just approaching the turn in the road, around which you will see the goal you are pursuing! One more tack may bring you to the harbor!

No one can tell what magnificent future may just be dawning upon him! Wait to see what will happen to you! It is always darkest just before the dawn!

"We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking place
And we'll *not* fail!"



THE SPIRIT OF TRUE HOSPITALITY. (See page 241.)

## XLI

## HOSPITALITY.

AN "inhospitable home" is the same sort of contradiction as an "unseaworthy vessel."

As the customs of life alter, the forms of hospitality are changed; but its obligations do not diminish.

The traveller in this modern world of through trains and easily accessible hotels has not the same claim upon the friendly entertainment of householders that the early pioneer had, when night overtook him on the prairie or in the forest; but there are few homes that are not often called upon to offer food and shelter to the needy, or gracious entertainment to friends.

There ought to be a guest-chamber in every home therefore, and it is a distinct misfortune when this is impossible. And yet it must not be forgotten that its absence is sometimes the best developer of the grace of hospitality, for there is no such culture of the heart as having to give up

one's bed to a guest and sleep in a "shake down" on the floor.

Who cannot remember visits that have broken up the even tenor of the household ways for many days and cost a sacrifice from every member of the family, and yet were among the holiest benedictions of the daily life? I have heard that in the long New England winters my ancestors used to load their families (and a bountiful store of provisions) into their sleighs and drive back and forth across the frozen country, visiting for many days at a time in their old colonial farm-houses, and the story haunts my dreams like one of the old myths. It may be impossible to entertain your friends sumptuously in high vaulted chambers and beneath eider-down quilts; but who is too poor to invite a friend in, to eat a crust of bread and drink a cup of tea? The grace and joy of hospitality are not proportioned to the luxury of the feast but to the spirit of the welcome. Shall I ever forget a supper of bread and butter with apple sauce, in a lonely New York State farm-house, served by the hands of the old grandmother of a friend of mine? That wild, winter night when I went to an icy chamber, in the full expectation of taking my death-cold, I found a genial warmth between the

sheets and discovered that a stick of hickory fire wood had been heated in the kitchen oven, wrapped in a flannel cloth, and placed in the long unused bed. I have slept on hair mattresses in steam heated chambers; but never in my life have I experienced such a delicious warmth as that hot stick of hickory diffused through my shivering limbs!

Modern hospitality is too extravagant; it is too formal; it is too artificial! One can hardly think of the great "routs" in the mansions of our *nouveau riche* without disgust. If people cannot make swell parties with hired musicians and expensive caterers, they do not dare to entertain at all. Luxury is leading to excess and excess to vice, and there are homes in which an evening meal is a menace to private morals. Of such a one it was said not long ago that "no one ever entered it who was not debased by its influence."

Recall the tribute to that greatest of English statesmen, "No person ever entered the closet of William Pitt who did not come out of it a braver man!" Say what you will, such ought to be the influence of every householder and of every home!

There are multitudes of such homes and of such people, thank God! To sit down at those

tables bountifully spread with simple food; to rest a little while by the hearth fire; to listen to those low voices; to breathe that pure atmosphere; to hear those noble sentiments of unselfish heroism is like going into a cool forest out of a blistering summer heat and like gliding into a quiet harbor out of a weltering tempest on the ocean.

Whatever else you deny yourselves, do not forego the pleasure of having your friends break bread at your table now and then. Cultivate the divine art of making them happy and of doing them good. However sad a heart your friend brings with him, send him away with a glad one. Treat him so that the memories of that brief visit will haunt him like the odors of crushed violets or the memories of Sabbath bells.

Learn from blind old Homer the divine art of "welcoming the coming and speeding the departing guest." The strategic moments of all hospitality are those when your friend arrives and when he leaves. Whatever else you fail in, do not let him come without seeing gladness in your eyes, or go without beholding sorrow. It is oftenest on the threshold that you detect the true character of a host.

## XLII

## HOUSEHOLD BENEVOLENCES.



HARITY begins at home!" Yes —but does not end there, as many people seem to think! No home is ideal which is not a fountain of benevolence; but many are mere stagnant pools into which the blessings of life flow only to be absorbed or evaporated. Their inmates never impart power, cheerfulness, or helpfulness to others and their plea is always and everywhere the same—"We have no surplus."

Now, it is this subterfuge of selfishness which I wish to denounce. There never was a home in which there was not something to share! When the inspired Psalmist penned those beautiful words "My cup runneth over," he uttered a universal truth, for there is always a little overflow from the cup of every man's life and from the life of every home. It may not be an overflow of money; but it will be of time or strength or hope or love.

If you doubt the truth of this assertion I have only to remind you of the age-old proverb—"The best friends of the poor are the poor!" You cannot dig so low down in the social scale as to come upon a level of life where people do not help each other. No! It is not the absence of the resources of helpfulness, but of the *disposition* of helpfulness that accounts for the lack of household benevolences. Families squander everything on themselves and so imagine they have nothing left for others.

To each one the good God has given a little surplus for the assistance of people needier than themselves, and this they squander first in order to be sure of having the usufruct of all.

One Sunday morning a father gave his boy two nickels, saying that one was for himself and the other for the Lord. The little fellow put both of them in his mouth, and as he was on his way to Sunday-school, stubbed his toe, fell flat and disgorged the coins, one of which fell upon a board and the other between the cracks of the sidewalk.

As quick as thought he seized the former, put it back into his mouth, and said, "It's too bad; but I've lost the *Lord's* nickel!"

Most people do.

Yes—families become selfish. No one ever appeals to them successfully for help. Their doors are shut against the outside world. They live for themselves alone. What they might have given to others has always been lost between the cracks! If they have had bad luck, it is their "charity" money that has disappeared. If they have had good luck, their own personal necessities instantly expand to the point of absolute absorption of all surplusage.

This is a destructive and devilish spirit to get into a household. The father of such a family was recently appealed to for money to help an old friend who had been unfortunate and replied with more than brutal unfeelingness: "Let him help himself. I've had to help myself. No one ever helped me!"

The old Jews had a fixed ratio between income and benevolence. To some this appears arbitrary and irrational. And it must be confessed that it cannot but be harder to a family with an income of five hundred dollars a year to part with a tithe of it for the welfare of society than for a family with an income of five thousand dollars. But this does not prove that the first family cannot and ought not to give up a twentieth or a thirtieth! There is a universal

pressure of obligation upon the well-to-do to help the ill-to-do, and no family can honorably escape it.

It is our duty and our privilege not simply to take out of our abundance, but out of our necessities to help others. And to people who are governed by this principle there is always a little something even in the poorest home that can be divided with the needy.

Let every household have its regular charities. Choose some special object of your helpfulness and devote yourselves to it untiringly. Let it have all your spare pennies and the warm devotion of your heart. But also open your household heart to every object of human compassion. Identify yourself by sympathetic relations (at least) with every enterprise for the welfare of mankind.

"Do good unto all men, as ye have opportunity," says the Bible.

I wonder if a knowledge of the derivation and original meaning of three of the most beautiful words of our language would come home to other people's hearts as they did to mine!

Let me see.

Bene—well; volence—wishing.

Bene—well; diction—speaking.

Bene—well; faction—doing.

# Household Benevolences

Benevolence; Benediction; Benefaction.

How near those three words come to summing up the whole duty of man! To wish men well; to speak to them kindly; to act toward them charitably—what else is there?

It was Horace Mann who said:

"The soul of the benevolent man does not seem to reside much in his own body. Its life, to a great extent, is a mere reflex of the lives of others. It migrates into their bodies, and, identifying its existence with theirs, finds its own happiness in increasing and prolonging their pleasures; in extinguishing and solacing their pains."

I have known homes where this spirit had taken up its permanent residence and turned them into a heaven of rest for the unfortunate. No one can enter those portals without a feeling of admiration and even wonder.

## XLIII.

## KEEP SWEET.

A POOR fellow who had been passing through some very hard experiences, told the story of his troubles to his old friend Dwight L. Moody. At the conclusion of the long narrative, that wisest and kindest of counsellors put his hand on the shoulder of the sufferer and said: "You've been unjustly treated. It's quite enough to embitter you; but don't let it. Whatever happens to you in life, keep sweet. I've made it my invariable rule to keep sweet!"

If you want a happy home, this is absolutely the only rule that will make it so. Enough things happen to married people to embitter them and to sour them both, God knows! Among others less important, they are not unlikely to find that they have been badly mistaken in each other, if not abominably fooled.

Even if they are happily mated, their children are often sickly or unmanageable, bringing them worry of mind or anguish of heart.

They hoped to "get on in the world;" occupy good positions in society; enjoy travel; acquire culture; save money—and a whole lot more of worthy things. But ninety out of a hundred of them see their bubbles burst and their dream fade. Does anybody say that this sugars the disposition of the average man? No! He justifies himself in his bitterness; thinks everyone else would be the same in his circumstances; believes no other frame of mind is really possible.

But listen!

In the first place, the embittered man is an unhappy man. You can no more be happy and bitter at the same time than you can be light and heavy; or white and black; or than a persimmon can be green and ripe! Of course, there is a devilish sort of happiness in being unhappy.

But it is not very creditable to a man to be able to enjoy it, and it is only a very unhappy kind of happiness, after all. The real pleasures of life are possible only when the heart is empty of all malignant feelings. Then pour the venom out of your heart! Look on the bright side of things! Take life in good part. For if you do, you will surely experience not a little genuine joy even in the greatest adversities of life.

In the second place, the embittered man makes

other people wretched. But every honorable person in the world ought to be ashamed to add to the sorrows of his loved ones. The greatest happiness of life is in seeing the happiness of those who are dependent on us, and it is so easy to make them happy! You have only to carry a smiling face which you can do even if your heart is sad. But if you succeed in really "keeping sweet," you will shed light like a star and joy will abound in the hearts of your dear ones.

In the third place, the embittered man makes all the wheels of life go hard.

We never can see things right when we are angry. It is like trying to look at a landscape with a grain of sand in the eye. We misjudge the situation of our affairs and the motives or conduct of our friends.

And we not only cannot see things right, but we cannot *do* them right! Anger disturbs our aim. It is when you are out of temper that you break your dishes and drop your stitches and make the speeches that alienate your friends. There are industries in which the accidents are twice as numerous in the last hour of the day, when the workmen are tired and nervous and cross, as in the hour immediately following dinner. Try to drive a nail when you are in bad

temper and see how often you will hit your finger. But the cosmic energies are the meek messengers of the sweet-tempered man. The rivers flow his way; the stars in their courses fight for him; the winds are his allies.

How perfectly absurd and useless it is to get out of sympathy with life. The universe is too big an affair to warrant suspicion and anger.

A visitor was trying to give Thomas Carlyle some notion of the philosophy of Margaret Fuller, and quoted her famous saying, "I accept the universe!"

"Gad! She'd better!" he answered grimly.

And so had we, for it is sound at the core and all right from centre to circumference. "God's in his heaven and all's right with the world."

One night a traveller heard the watchman of an Irish village calling the hours.

"One o'clock and all's well
Two o'clock and all's well."

After that he fell asleep, but was awakened a little later on by the same voice crying in a slightly different tone:

"Four o'clock! McGinty's mill has burned to the ground; the stock is destroyed; two men are killed; all's well!"

# Keep Sweet

It may be hard to perceive it at times; but all *is* well! Let us not misunderstand life, though. It is not a dream; but a warfare. It is not all sunshine, but shadows also. It is not all comedy; but tragedy as well.

"A little crib beside the bed,
A little face upon the spread;
A little shoe upon the floor
A little frock behind the door.
A little lad with curly hair,
A little blue-eyed face and fair;
A little lane that leads to school,
A little pencil, slate and rule;
A little winsome, blithesome maid
A little hand within his laid.
A little family gathering round
A little turf-headed, tear-stained mound.
A little cottage, acres four,
A little old-timed fashioned store;
A little added to his soil,
A little rest from hardest toil;
A little silver in his hair,
A little stool and easy chair.
We say 'Good day' at early dawn,
We smile when little baby's born,
We laugh all through the sunshine bright,
When life is done—we say 'Good night.'"

Can't *you* keep sweet through it all? Others do!

## XLIV

## GRAY HAIRS, THE SUPREME TEST OF MARRIAGE.

 ALK about the dangers and temptations of youth! They are mere popguns to the Mauser rifles of old age! Youth tries the flesh, but old age tests the spirit. When a man runs up against gray hair, wrinkles, disillusionments, advancing shadows, bursting bubbles, open graves—he begins to know what the real strain of life is.

And age tests institutions as well as individuals. Take marriage. It is hard for a young couple to love uninterruptedly through poverty, child-bearing, and the period of discovery, when a thousand undreamed of faults and even vices, reveal themselves. But the real pinch comes when a woman begins to have to brush the dandruff and pick the gray hairs off from the stooped shoulders of an "old man!" Is this the young hero to whom she gave her budding affections—

this old dotard who is losing his memory and manners? What is there to love about him?

And it comes to the man even sooner. What a cold chill those wrinkles and that false front send down his back! He married red cheeks and bright eyes and pearly teeth and a plump figure—not this thin, sallow, faded old woman! As for himself, he feels as young as he ever did! His eye is not dim and his natural force is not abated (or so he thinks, the dunce!), and the idea that he, who is still so young and handsome (and who could still have any sixteen-year-old girl for the asking), must pass the rest of his days, bound by the chains of matrimony, to this venerable female person, excites a spasm of rebellion.

It is a good thing that these tremendous changes do not come all at once, like lightning out of a clear sky or a snowstorm in August. Nature is merciless sometimes. It isn't an easy thing to discover evidences of kindness in her letting these shocking alterations come at all. But if they have to come it is at least an act of grace upon her part to afford little premonitions now and then, as single leaves falling at intervals foretell the naked tree. They give us a start. The heart stands still at even these slight intimations of the approaching winter of old age. But it is

at least not like having the flowers frosted in a single night!

There is a very dramatic story of a young woman whose lover fell into the crevasse of a glacier, and who remained unmarried in the fond hope of seeing his body when at the end of fifty years the flow of the ice river should bring it to an open place in the mountains.

The day arrived, the body appeared, and the wrinkled old lady received a fatal shock at sight of the pink-faced boy whose countenance she imagined would be wrinkled like her own!

Well, it is to be said that if she found it hard to love this beardless boy, she would have probably found it still harder to have loved a parchment-faced old man!

Yes, the great problem of married life is old age! It is not the problem as to whether grizzled old couples will separate or be divorced. There comes a time when sheer inertia will keep them together. But the problem is, will they continue to love?

Upon this problem let us advance an observation or two. In the first place, the sooner we recognize the futility of our efforts to maintain a hold on each other by mere bodily charms, the better. The delusion that love is physical dies

hard. We seem to know the soul by its material manifestation alone. How can a beautiful soul be in an unbeautiful body? When the body is old, will not the soul be old also? Reasoning thus, we resort to "hair dyes" and "plumpers" to feed the dying fires of "passion." But it is like feeding flames with cold water or gray mists!

In the second place, we can only keep love alive by becoming more beautiful in character. Do you not know that kindness is always beautiful! Unselfishness will transfigure even a deformed body as the candles on an altar transfigure dark and ugly cathedral windows. If you have been kind before, be doubly kind when you are old. If you want to keep love captive, you must bind him now, not with red cheeks, but with gentleness and devotion! This is the time to let all your graces effloresce. If you are sour and irritable, as well as wrinkled and gray, your doom is sealed.

Nothing can be so beautiful, but nothing can be so ugly as old age. To be adorable was so easy when your step was light and your figure was round and vital force was issuing from every pore. To be adorable now demands toil and consecration.

Be mellow! After all, there is nothing so fine

as ripeness. You never know how luscious an apple can be until the sun and rain have gotten into every fibre and time has brought out all its latent sweetness! Give me (above all other people) an old man or woman saturated and steeped in the golden light of the autumn of human life.

Be courteous! Courtesy is (in the essence) appreciation, and therefore belongs in its brightest manifestation to advanced years. There is no chivalry like that of the old gentleman! There is no courtesy like that of the old lady!

Be cheerful! Aye, there's the rub! How the shadows darken our old age! How they lengthen across the landscape! What is there to be cheerful about? No matter, be all the more cheerful as there is less to be cheerful over. Be cheerful over nothing—like your little grandchild. You must, if you want to inspire love! A cheerless old age will no more inspire love than a cheerless landscape will inspire flowers!

There are no such haters as unhappy old married couples, but, on the other hand, there are no such lovers as happy ones.

"On parents' knees, a naked new-born child
Thou wept, while all around thee smiled.
So live that e're thy last long sleep
Thou then mayest smile, while all around thee weep."

## XLV

## RELIGION IN THE HOME.



AN is incurably religious," said Sabatier.

Yes, man *is* incurably religious! That divine malady (if malady you think it is) is as inseparable from humanity as qualities are from substances.

It is as inevitable a function of our race to produce philosophies, governments, and religions as of a tree to produce leaves and blossoms and fruit.

And, therefore, the puerility of those men who arrogate to themselves the proud title of "Free Thinkers" (as if no one else thought freely) consists in the twofold delusion—that a man can stop being what he essentially is, and that the race can maintain its ambition, its righteousness, its existence without belief in that unseen universe from which it has been evolved.

In the presence of mystery, pain, and death, man can no more help creating a religious phil-



CHRIST IN THE HOME. (See page 260.)

osophy than he can help creating a political philosophy in the presence of mobs, revolutions, and anarchy.

*Mystery.* As long as there is anything unknown, men will speculate about its nature, and such speculation, when it is reverent, is religion. There will always be something unknown, for each new discovery by science only pushes the horizon of the uncomprehended a little farther back. Therefore there will always be religion.

*Pain.* While we suffer we cannot help theorizing. A dog may suffer and only whine; but it is a spiritual necessity for man to try to bring this fearful phenomenon within the pale of rational thought. Such theorizing is religion.

*Death.* When our loved ones draw that last inexplicable sigh, and lie down on their biers in that last inexplicable silence, we must hope that they have gone to heaven, and that hope is religion.

Do not waste your time, then, in trying to banish religion from your own life and the life of the race, but consecrate your talents to the purification of its heart-life and practice. Every fresh cosmical conception demands corresponding changes in our conceptions of religion. We now have a *new* cosmical conception, and it is neces-

sary to revamp our ideas of our religious system. This does not, however, mean either creation or substitution, but only readjustment. We must find in this sublime theory of the sidereal universe material for religious thought. Otherwise science, however profound and true, will prove impotent for the salvation of the race, for, while society develops by knowledge, it lives by faith! "Thou, Lord, hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are not at rest until they find thee," was the conclusion of St. Augustine's reflection upon human life.

The conception of a humanity filled with the love and the spirit of God, can alone furnish the inner ideal by which the social organism can develop. Society advances by the successive decay of those ideals, as, under the ever unfolding conceptions of God and his providence, one displaces the other.

All religions are entitled to our respect in proportion as they have thus furnished humanity with ideals higher than those they have displaced.

Christianity is therefore entitled to our supreme respect, because it has displaced all lower ideals with the highest. It is not the true glory of the Christian religion to be unlike all others but only to be their perfection and fulfilment, which it is.

It may not be perfect in its present manifestation, for every idea loses something of its purity and grandeur in the attempt to realize itself. But because it is the only religion that to-day can make men either aspire or hope or blush, it is not only entitled to, but it demands the reverence of every one who seeks the truth.

Be religious, then. It is not enough that you are simply good, "for religion is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling." "It is morality touched by emotion."

And consecrate your whole strength to creating a religious atmosphere in your home! Let the little children breathe it from their infancy. Make it perfectly apparent to them from their first dawn of consciousness, that their parents are living in the presence of an infinite spirit whom they love and adore with their whole hearts.

It was said by King Uzziah who began to reign when he was sixteen years old, that "he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah who had *understanding in the vision of God!*" Little children know the people who have this understanding in the vision of God! Their own souls are so full of wonder and awe that they discover that spiritual attitude in others by an unerring sympathy.

# Religion in the Home

It is a mental attitude without which both the individual and domestic life will be an arid desert.

Among the traditional sayings of Jesus Christ, these three are the most remarkable:

"He that wonders shall reign and he that reigns shall rest."

"Look with wonder at that which is before you."

"Raise the stone and thou shalt find me: cleave the wood and I am there."

It was the mental attitude of awe, wonder, reverence, devotion that made the Saviour's life sublime!

"In every soul," said Goethe, "there should be a threefold reverence, for that which is above, for that which is around, for that which is beneath."

These feelings ought to pervade the life of every household, for they alone can make existence seem sacred and beautiful to children.

Let the religious life in the home be simple and sincere. Make it vibrant with joy. Help the children to believe that God is love. Sing the grand old hymns of the church with them at the twilight hour. Tell them the sublime stories of the Bible as a tonic for their spiritual languors. Let there be no sham and cant in what you say or do.

## Religion in the Home

Reproduce the religious atmosphere of such homes as those of Elkanah and Hannah, if you wish to have children like Samuel; and of Joseph and Mary, if you wish to have your offspring grow up in favor with God and man, like Jesus Christ.

## XLVI

## HOME THRUSTS.

THE home is ennobled by the virtues of the individual. Let me try to brace up the weak and convert the wicked by four brief parables.

### "SAW WOOD."

They had met for the first time since the last day of school away back in the seventies, and were strolling along the boulevard, arm in arm. It was —"how's Tom?" and "how's Jerry?" and "how's Frank?" and it was "do you remember this?" and "do you remember that?" and it was a laugh here and a sigh there, and now and then a furtive tear.

"They tell me that Bill is rich."

"Yes."

"How did he make his money?"

"Oh, he just kept 'sawing wood.'"

Thank heaven for this imperishable phrase!

# Home Thrusts

The buck-saw and the saw-buck have vanished along with the spinning wheel and the distaff.

There are millions of children who have never heard the buzz-buzz-buzz of the saw, or seen the spurt of the dust—up and down, up and down—as the sawyer rose and fell at his work.

The picturesque is disappearing from life, and I am one who mourns the passing of the buck-saw! How will needy students now earn their way through college; dyspeptic ministers get enough exercise to promote digestion, and old soldiers with wooden legs earn an honest penny to supplement their pensions?

The buck-saw and the saw-buck have vanished; but they have left behind them a metaphor.

"Keep sawing wood!"

Ransack the dead languages and plunder the living, and find me a better motto if you can!

The unfortunate (because too late-born) youth of this generation may not appreciate its force but those of us who have faced a cord of four foot maple at daybreak and seen it almost imperceptibly, but steadily undergo its trisection, until, at sunset, it lay ready for the fireplace—know how piquant a metaphor it is.

The old Greeks said, "All triumphs come by trying."

# Home Thrusts

All we say to the tired, the discouraged, and the hopeless is—"keep sawing wood!"

Is your burden heavier than you can bear? Is your road rougher than you can travel? Are your obstacles higher than you can surmount? "Keep sawing wood!"

Say what you will, the forces of Nature all stand waiting to help the man who "keeps sawing wood."

When I was living in the little frontier town of Kettle Falls, away up on the Columbia River, I entered a bank and found the cashier, a young fellow of twenty, seated at his desk in an attitude of profound melancholy.

"What in the world is the matter?" I asked.

He drew a deep sigh and answered, "I have been out West for six long months and am not rich yet!"

I suppressed a peal of laughter, clapped him on the back, and said, "Walter, you are born, but you are not buried. Just keep on sawing wood!"

### SINK OR SWIM.

In childhood we see the weakness and the strength, the vices and the virtues, the superstitions and the foibles of manhood.

# Home Thrusts

A little boy of six had been begging to take a bath in the surf. But when he saw the crested breakers rolling toward the shore his desire was swallowed up in terror. After all other persuasion had proved futile, his father offered him fifty cents if he would let him carry him out in his arms. The new motive proved irresistible, and clasping the parental neck like a vice he permitted himself to be borne out into the surf. He stood it fairly well until the waves began to splash his trembling little ankles, and then exclaimed in broken accents, "Papa-I-guess-I-will-only-take-ten-cents worth-this-time!"

You smile? Ah! but you are laughing at yourself and at the greater portion of mankind.

There rolls the sea of life! It invites us to plunge into its waters. We see the hardy swimmers sporting on its waves, and hear their shouts of exultations; but the first splash of the spray in our faces scares us back; it is so much colder and wetter than we thought!

To encourage us to take our plunge, attractive and costly rewards are offered us. They stimulate us for a moment, and under the impulse of this artificial courage we go forward, but before we have fairly wet our ankles we cry out with the faint-heartedness of the little child,

"I-guess-I-will-only-take-ten-cents-worth-this-time!"

No man ever mastered the sublime art of breasting life's billows on "ten cents worth!" He must do more than "wet his ankles!"

That was the trouble with Jenkins. He wanted a fortune, but when he learned that he had to "take his coat off," "roll up his sleeves," "begin at the bottom," "get wet and dirty and tired," he just said to himself under his breath, "I guess I will only take ten cents worth this time," and never went near the water again.

That was the trouble with Dobson, when he started in to work for "Reform." He had looked at the men who went "bathing" (from a distance) and they seemed to him to be having great sport. So in he went.

But when the wind of ridicule began to blow in his face, and waves of abuse to roll over him, he just cut for the shore and muttered as he went, "I guess I will only take ten cents worth this time."

And that was the trouble with Spingley, when he tried to break off the drink habit. He couldn't stand the laughter of the "boys," nor the dry tickling in his throat, and thought he wouldn't quit this time. "Ten cents worth" was about

all the tee-total-ism he could stand at one trial.

Any man who wants to learn to swim on the sea of life, must plunge in "all over," "duck his head," "swallow water," and get half drowned!

He must "endure hardship," "bear the yoke," "be buffeted!" Ten cents worth won't do! It must be "all or nothing," "do or die," "sink or swim," "survive or perish!"

Fifty cents worth of reward will always cost you just fifty cents worth of wetting.

### "OVER, THROUGH OR UNDER."

On those boyish pilgrimages which we made into the country around Auburn on Saturday afternoon—pilgrimages to those sacred shrines, the swimming hole, the skating pond, the blackberry patch, or the chestnut grove, upon coming to the fences we always exclaimed: "Over, through, or under," which was our style of saying "In life there are three ways of passing obstacles —climb over them, crawl through them, or creep under them."

In the morning, when our breakfasts were close to our jackets, and the full tide of life was surging in our veins, we vaulted the fences or

scrambled over their tops, whether they were board, picket, stone, or stake-and-rider, there being, thank heaven, no barbed wire in those golden days.

A little later on, when the sun was hot, or our hands were numb, and our legs were weary, we looked for convenient openings between the rails (or made them) by which to secure an easier passage through.

Toward evening, on the homeward way, disappointed because the ice was too thin, or the farmer was on the watch at the edge of the chestnut grove; hungry, cross and tired, we lay flat down upon our little stomachs like so many worms, and wriggled our way under.

This was life in miniature. There are still obstacles to be passed, and there are still only three ways.

Do you remember how you took your first reverses? As a Kentucky mare takes a ditch in a fox hunt, was it not? At a single, scornful leap.

But those that came afterward seemed one after another to grow higher! We took hold of the top rail, tried a spring or two, and then began to look for some hole to crawl through.

But how about the last ones? Have you had to lay down flat and crawl under? Well, it is

better to get past them in that way than not at all!

It was said of the provincials who participated in the battle at Lake George during the Indian wars "that in the morning they fought like good boys, about noon like men, and in the afternoon like demons."

No, we do not think you are defeated because you have laid down to crawl under. You are only tired. The rest at the journey's end is too sweet to be abandoned now.

That little fellow who just manages to squeeze under that low rail in the last fence, his face all scratched with brambles, great welts across his back, where the farmer laid the beech rod, his bag of nuts in the farmer's hand, the seat of his trousers in the mouth of the farmer's dog, knows what home means—a great plate of buttered toast, a hot fire in the grate and a feather-bed.

Keep on, "over, through, or under." Home lies at the journey's end.

## "PLAY BALL!"

Ten thousand men, women, and small boys are seated around the "diamond."

The "rooters" settle themselves comfortably

in the shade of the grandstand, and the "fans" adjust themselves as best they can to the dull misery of the bleaching boards.

"Clang! clang!" goes the bell. The two "nines" take their places and the audience draws a quick breath.

"Play ball!" shouts the umpire, and the game begins. With the precision of a delicate machine the work goes on, until a slide down to second and a false judgment agitates the players like a blow struck on the crazy bone. A wild kick from Buck Ewing, an angry remonstrance from Captain Anson—"white stockings" dancing up and "red stockings" dancing down—criminations and recriminations; the game stopped; the mischief to pay, and ten thousand people who came to see a hot game played out in a couple of hours, sit staring at a trivial row which they neither understand nor care a tuppence about.

Watch that mass of human beings! An angry buzz arises from it. A spasmodic movement shoots through it. It writhes and undulates like a hive of bees about to swarm. It contracts like a vast serpent coiled around its victims, ready to give them its deadly squeeze. Suddenly a wild, incomprehensible roar arises.

"Play ball! Play ball! Play ball!"

# Home Thrusts

The vast organism has uttered its final command. What does it care about the personal grievances or gusty passions of the players? It has its rights—this vast organism—and will maintain them. It has paid for its sport. It demands "value received."

"Play ball! Settle your differences where else you will—over the fence, behind the barn—anywhere but here! Play ball!"

And this is the stern, imperative, the inviolable command of the vast human organism we call "Society," before whose gaze we are all of us players.

What do people care for our petty grievances, or our little indispositions? Each one of us is expected to render some service for value received, and if we do not do it cheerfully and soon, we hear the angry muttering first and then the fierce outcry: "Play ball!"

What do we educate these children in our public schools for? Is it to give them tastes that make them scorn the toil of life and sit around in idleness? Not much. You graduates of Hughes and Woodward and Walnut Hills; of Yale and Harvard and Cornell. "Play ball!"

What do we hire you preachers and teachers and postmen and policemen and street cleaners

and firemen and night watchmen for? Is it to nurse your grievances and fuss because you are not better paid? "Play ball!"

What do we pay our Congressmen and Senators for? Is it to sit in the halls of legislation and quarrel and dicker and chew their little rags, and leave the great organism of eighty million souls to writhe and twist upon their bleaching boards? No!

"Play ball—everybody!" We have had enough arguing and explaining and fussing. "Play ball!"

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